

The Prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane
With Reference to Other Prayers and Speeches before
Death or Martyrdom

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Ph D

The University of Edinburgh

1996



Dedicated to

My dear parents, Mr K Thanka Nadar and Mrs S Selvappoo Nadar

Who sacrificed me willingly

For God's ministry

Acknowledgements

I would like to thankfully acknowledge the constant academic guidance and support generously given to me by my supervisor Dr D L Mealand. I would like to thank Professor J C O'Neill, my second supervisor for his academic and pastoral support during these three years.

I would also like to acknowledge the help of Mr D F Wright (Ecclesiastical History), Mr D B Robinson (Classics), Dr N Wyatt (Theology and Religious Studies) who gave of their precious time to discuss specific areas.

I am immensely thankful to those who made the fulfilment of this dream possible in terms of finance. The main source of finance for this project comes from Miller's Scholarship of New College, University of Edinburgh and Overseas Research Students Award of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals at UK. In addition, Freeland Barbour Trust for Educational Missionary Work in India and North China, Cowan House Scholarship and my own institution Christian Medical College and Hospital (CMCH, Vellore) have contributed generously to complete this research.

I would like to record my appreciation for all the New College library staff who were so supportive throughout my study. My sincere thanks to Ms Maureen Slatter and Rev Canon Gianfranco Tellini for helping me with French and Italian translations and to Dr Jeremy Moiser, Rev Margaret MacGregor and Mr Ian & Mrs Heather Andrew for reading through my dissertation.

I think of my whole family who graciously agreed to my absence for three years from their midst. I also thank everyone in the Chaplaincy Department of CMCH, Vellore and the administration of CMCH who believed that my project may be of some help to my further ministry in this Institution.

I, with sincere gratitude, also think of my friends in Edinburgh who have stood with me at my times of trouble and difficulties. Above all, I thank God for his loving kindness towards me to enable me to complete this project.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own and all quotations and sources have been duly acknowledged.

T Arul Dhas

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

There are Jewish literary traditions of *Isaac's* prayer which are different from the Biblical narrative in Gn 22. In the story of Aqedah, it looks as if Isaac's obedience and willingness together with Abraham's have been accepted in God's sight as sacrifice and something which forgives people's sins and which redeems people from all distress. This was done even without Isaac literally being sacrificed according to the tradition. If Jesus was familiar with these traditions, it could be that Jesus thought that his death and sacrifice might be accepted even without the actual performance of it.

The last words of *Socrates* and his acceptance of his death without any complaint had been influential in the Hellenistic culture. As Greek literature had a great influence on whatever happened in the literary world of the first century, it is just possible that Jesus was familiar with the story of the heroic death of Socrates and his words. In addition, our observation has brought us to the conclusion that the Gospel writers have been influenced to some extent by Greek writings. In any case it is likely that Jesus knew that to be troubled in the face of death was not considered honourable in the sight of wise people.

Our reference to *Eleazar* sheds some light on the life of Jewish martyrs. We have noticed that the certainty and the willingness of Eleazar were exemplary for the other martyrs. There is no question of escape from his torture in Eleazar's mind. It is also to be noted that the tradition of martyrs is not new to Jesus. Eleazar prayed that his death may be accepted an expiatory sacrifice. There is a possibility of influence between the prayer of Eleazar and either Jesus or the Gospel writers.

The story of the Christian martyr *Polycarp* has been taken with caution because it comes from the second century and it draws on the model of Jesus himself. However, in our study, this account is helpful in reflecting the mind-set of a second century religious person. Polycarp had the chance to escape but he refused to because he considered martyrdom the will of God.

During the *analysis* of the different Biblical accounts, we notice the significant difference of emphasis and details in Mark, Matthew, Luke, John and Hebrews. They reflect the literary needs of the authors or composers. With a fair amount of certainty we are able to say that Jesus during his earthly life, just before his crucifixion, prayed in a place called Gethsemane that he might be saved from death.

The literary evidence proves that the *cup* referred to by Jesus at Gethsemane is the cup of suffering and death. This exposition is in complete harmony with Jesus' attitude towards his death in other parts of the Gospels. To describe the cup a cup of punishment or a cup of wrath is without sufficient evidence. The *will of God* was an important consideration to Jesus in understanding his own death. While Eleazar and Polycarp seem to be very sure of God's will, Jesus struggles in agony to gain this clarity. The disciples were asked to *be awake and to pray* in order that they *may not enter into temptation*. It is insufficient to understand this admonition referring to the disciples alone and therefore we have related the word *πειρασμός* to Jesus himself. Jesus asked the disciples to watch and to pray so that they would not lure Jesus to forsake his chosen path of suffering which was God's will for him.

The study of Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane in the light of the prayers and speeches of Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp gives a better understanding of Jesus' attitude towards his life and death. It makes very clear the reality of Jesus' own desire to escape his death which was presumably imminent. It also makes clear the priority Jesus gave to the will of God.

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Abbreviations

<i>AJT</i>	<i>Asian Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CQR</i>	<i>Church Quarterly Review</i>
<i>ClQuart</i>	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CrozQ</i>	<i>Crozer Quarterly</i>
<i>EpworthR</i>	<i>Epworth Review</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>IRM</i>	<i>International Review of Mission</i>
<i>ITQ</i>	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>J Rel & H</i>	<i>Journal of Religion and Health</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplementary Series</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LCL</i>	<i>The Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>LTP</i>	<i>Laval Théologique et Philosophique</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
<i>LQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>

<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
n.s.	new series
<i>Numen</i>	<i>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</i>
<i>OCD</i>	Oxford Classical Dictionary
<i>Proc Aris Soc</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i>
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de Science religieuse</i>
<i>SBL</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	G.Kittel and G.Friedrich (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	G.J.Botterweck and H.Ringgren (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>Th</i>	<i>Theology</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift Für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> ¹

¹ Other abbreviations are mainly based on Kilian, J 1989. *Form and Style in Theological Texts. A Guide for the Use of the Harvard Reference System*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The question 'How did Jesus understand his death?' has been the concern of the New Testament scholarship for a long time. We cannot close this inquiry since new findings get added from time to time in the study of the life of Jesus giving more light on the ancient world of Jesus. The present study asks a few important questions in this area and tries to find a comprehensive picture of the death of Jesus from a Gethsemane point of view.

The prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane raises two difficult and crucial questions in the study of the New Testament: (1) Did Jesus think that his suffering and death were essential? (2) To what extent was Jesus influenced by his cultural and literary background to understand his own fate? These questions are important and relevant not only for academic purposes. They are highly significant for the foundations of the Christian faith itself.

The following questions are crucial from the Gethsemane point of view. To what extent does Jesus' prayer reflect his view on his own death? What did he mean by the word "cup"? What exactly did he mean by his Father's will? Is the temptation which is referred to at Gethsemane only that of the disciples or of Jesus also?

To what extent was Jesus influenced by his culture? Did he know Greek? The stories of Jewish, Hellenistic and Christian martyrs of the day provide the cultural

and literary milieu of the Gospel writings. The question we need to face is not only whether the evangelists were influenced, but also whether Jesus himself was influenced by his cultural and literary background.

Jesus prayed to God that the cup of suffering and violent death might be removed from him. It is not a cup of punishment. This was a real temptation in the life of Jesus. The temptation which Jesus refers to at Gethsemane may not be simply a temptation of others but may also involve himself. We need to take seriously this interpretation also. If we do so, here we have a scene where Jesus pleads with his disciples not to tempt him in order that he might avoid this cup. Rather, he asks them to be awake and pray so that he may obediently submit himself to the will of God.

If we look through the eyes of the Christian religious tradition, the death of Jesus is extremely crucial to understand the origin of Christianity. We have access to the reports of the evangelists regarding the death of Jesus. In the process of reporting we also have a clue as to what they understood about the death of Jesus. However, if we need to establish the meaning and significance of the death of Jesus, we need one more piece of information, an answer to the much debated question of what Jesus himself thought about his death. In this context, the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane is at the centre of our search to enter into the world of Jesus.

The moment we talk about Gethsemane, the picture of a garden and Jesus praying there with agony comes into our mind. It is interesting to see that the expressions

‘Gethsemane’, ‘garden’ and ‘agony’ are from different Gospels (Gethsemane from Mt and Mk; garden from Jn; agony from Lk).

Early Christian Fathers have struggled to reconcile Gethsemane with the rest of Jesus’ life. There have been divisions in the Church on the basis of the emphasis on the divinity or humanity of Jesus. How could Jesus be certain of what was going to happen? If he was certain, why did he pray to God as if he was not certain of his future? These questions take their shape mainly through our understanding of Jesus.

The prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane could be approached from different perspectives. One could study it as a part of first century literature considering the literary values and history of the prayer. It is possible to study the same motif concentrating on linguistics. Someone could do a study on this prayer from a socio-cultural and political point of view. A study from a theological or Christological perspective would be another one. A historian who is primarily interested in history could do a predominantly historical study. Being aware of different kinds of study, we have chosen a predominantly historical one. It implies that in some places we would use the expertise of other kinds of study.

While we make this clarification, we need to mention one more aspect. What is one’s standpoint as one looks at the prayer of Jesus? In some sense, it is related to the choice I have just made to undertake, a predominantly historical study. Even though we plan to do this study as a historian, here we are talking about a subtler form of prejudice. We consider some aspects of history more important than others

due to some reasons. I must admit that the importance of this particular historical study is determined by my allegiance to a particular form of Christian faith. However, special care is taken to maintain the importance of the historical study in spite of the faith allegiance of the inquirer.

The prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane raises some important questions in our understanding of Jesus and our understanding of the Gospels. Since each of the four Gospels looks at this critical time of Jesus in a different way, we get a different view about Jesus from each one. When we look into the religio-philosophical background of Jesus, there is hope of understanding this puzzle a little more clearly.

1. Need for the study:

A comparative study of Gethsemane with other stories would help us to understand Jesus and his attitude towards his death. Gethsemane has been compared with the story of Isaac by some scholars. In a few other studies, Gethsemane has been compared with the martyrdom of Eleazar. However, there is a need for a study which takes seriously all the major religious and philosophical background of Jesus.

In that context, we have chosen four prominent figures and their prayers and sayings just before their violent death. We have chosen two from the Jewish context (Isaac and Eleazar), one from the Greek context (Socrates) and one from the Christian context (Polycarp). The religio-philosophical contexts of Jews, Greeks and early

Christians (like Polycarp¹) would give us a better picture of Jesus and his attitudes towards his death.

This was the main milieu of Jesus' upbringing. Therefore, this milieu is bound to influence Jesus' thinking naturally. It is from this assumption that we are doing this study.

2. Methodology of the study:

We shall adopt a historico-critical method in our analysis. Even though our main concern is about what happened in terms of history, we shall be satisfied with the nearest interpretation of the incident when it is impossible to establish the history as such. We presume that the Gospel records are faithful accounts by the respective writers. It should be mentioned here that the major evidences available to us are literary ones. The archaeological evidence would be considered as and when necessary.

However, whenever we identify a mixture of values and beliefs in their descriptions, we use a responsible scrutiny to delineate the different threads in the descriptions. This is done with the intention of making the historical event meaningful to twentieth century readers with their own values and beliefs. We also take into account the fact that there is no uniform value or belief in any point of time and in

¹ A question could be raised about the example of Polycarp since he comes from the second century CE. This example is chosen to see the mind-set of a religious person at the beginning of the millennium. As we discuss Polycarp, this will become clear.

any place. In spite of this complexity, our study attempts to make a significant contribution towards the contemporary scholarship of the study of Jesus. This is mainly to do with Jesus' understanding about his death.

3. Structure of the study:

The study is divided into six chapters. After the introduction, the second chapter deals with an overview of recent research. We have chosen a few analytical studies by A.Y.Collins, B.Saunderson and J.W.Holleran. There are a few narrative studies by W.S.Lawrence, J.P.Heil, E.K.Broadhead, M.Kiley, D.P.Senior and L.A.Ruprecht. Finally we shall consider some theological studies about Gethsemane by R.Feldmeier, B.L.Mack, F.Martin, R.S.Barbour, R.E.Brown and K.Madigan. This gives a scholarly background to our study. These studies have excellent features looking at different aspects of Gethsemane. However, relatively little attention is paid to other prayers and speeches of the ancient world in an attempt to arrive at the meaning and impact of Gethsemane. Therefore, our present study becomes a necessity.

The third chapter deals with prayers or speeches before death. Here we discuss Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp. The story in the book of Genesis is mainly Abraham centred. However, there are later variations in the extra-biblical writings and Targums where Isaac offers prayers that allegedly reflect his understanding of his sacrifice. Socrates' prayer for the prosperity of his journey from this world to the other world and his last words to Crito provide us with significant clues to

understand Socrates' view of his own death. Eleazar's prayer to God to take his life in exchange for that of his people explains how he thought of his death. In the face of death Polycarp prays that he may be received as a rich and acceptable sacrifice. These attitudes of men are some representative clues to understand the first century person.

In the same line of thinking, we devote our fourth chapter to discussing the five biblical accounts of Gethsemane (Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn and Heb). Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemane saying "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want". We notice the similarities and differences among different accounts. As a consequence, we discuss in this chapter the historicity of the Gethsemane prayer also.

In the fifth chapter, we choose four dominant themes from the Gethsemane narrative namely, 'Remove this cup from me', 'Not my will but yours be done', 'Are you asleep?' and 'That you may not enter into temptation'. These themes are major indicators of Jesus' attitude towards his death. It deals with Jesus' dilemma whether to go through the path of death or not. Jesus' call to his disciples to keep awake in order that they may not enter into temptation is closely connected with this dilemma of Jesus. Finally, we conclude with the sixth chapter which relates the four themes to the four people, namely Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp. Attempts have been made to trace the themes of Jesus' prayer in other prayers too.

4. Limitations of the study:

Due to the limitation of time and space for this specific study, we are not dealing here with all the major prayers before violent death. While thinking about the response of a human being in the face of death, it is also relevant to look into different world religions. Due to the nature of our present study, we are not entering into that area. Such a study would be more appropriate in the field of Religions than in the field of the New Testament.

One thing we are not doing in this study is to write a commentary on the Gethsemane narrative. Even though it would be essential in New Testament studies, that is beyond the scope of our present study. Another factor, which is the limitation of any historical study, is already hinted at in our methodology. We cannot establish the bare fact in history in its strictest sense. Any report of an incident is bound to incorporate the perception of the reporter that might be different from another reporter of the same event. In that sense, written history becomes an accumulation of dominant interpretations of an event. This will direct us towards the event. However, that itself is not the event.

It is our expectation that this study would enable us to go a step further to understand the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane and thereby of Jesus' understanding of his own death.

Chapter Two

AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH

The prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane has been interpreted by almost all Christian writers. This has been a puzzling point in the life of Jesus in the viewpoints of most of the writers. Recent and ancient scholars are divided in their interpretations. The early Church Fathers have their own system of interpretation about Gethsemane. In this section we shall look into some of the recent writings in the period 1970–1995 and their contributions to the study of the Prayer at Gethsemane in general.

We shall arrange the various studies on the basis of their analytical, narrative or theological nature. The studies which deal with specific areas of Gethsemane will be discussed in the relevant sections.

A. Analytical Studies of Gethsemane:

1. A.Y.Collins:

Adela Y.Collins, in her recent article, notes that “the passion narrative, whether pre-Markan or Markan, is profoundly different from such Greek and Latin accounts” (Collins 1994:501). Collins concedes that the words of Jesus, “I am deeply grieved, even to death”,² allude to a repeated sentence in Ps 42 and 43. This saying takes

² All Biblical references in this work are from the the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicized Edition 1995) unless otherwise stated.

seriously the form of Ps 42 and 43 as individual speech rather than as an expression of the hope of the early Jewish community. The individual speaker is identified with the Messiah.

Further, the saying of Jesus alludes to Jonah 4.9. When tormented by hot wind and lack of shade, Jonah wishes for death. In that context, Jonah replies to God that he is “angry enough to die”. Jonah’s response was used by God to explain the divine attitude towards Nineveh. However, Collins notes the significant difference between Jonah and the Gethsemane scene. “God initiates the dialogue with Jonah and both parties speak”. In the Gethsemane scene, “Jesus initiates the dialogue, but God does not speak” (:491). A context in which an agent of God receives instruction from God and the references to Jonah by the early Christians as a type of Jesus are suggested by Collins as reasons for alluding to Jonah.

The image of the cup reminds us of the cup of wrath in the Hebrew Bible, according to Collins. This is used to imply that God is the power behind the death of Jesus. “Although God has receded as a character, this narrative implies that the course of events is determined by God. The personal God of the prophets has been re-pictured as Fate-like” (:492).

Therefore, Collins concludes “that Scripture has played a major role in shaping the specificity of the text, in determining precisely how the story is told” (:492). Further, she writes,

Greek or Hellenized readers of the pre-Markan passion narrative may have seen some similarity in the second part of Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane, ‘not

what I want, but what you want', to the serene acceptance of death manifested by Socrates and his imitators. But such readers would have expected a more loquacious Jesus in the scene before Pilate, since the account of a noble death was often exploited in literature as a didactic opportunity. Mark has taken the passion narrative a little further in this direction by adding the trial before the Sanhedrin in which Jesus' response to the high priest is a didactic prophecy (14.62) (:500f).

Collins' way of comparing and contrasting the Gospel material with the Jewish and Greek material is a helpful one. The manner in which Collins understands the ability of the readers to compare Jesus with Socrates and their expectation of a different picture is to be noted closely here.

2. B.Saunderson:

Barbara Saunderson in her article "*Gethsemane: The Missing Witness*" (Saunderson 1989:224–233) argues that we cannot take for granted that there is no witness for the prayer at Gethsemane. As she enlists the viewpoints of various scholars about the historicity of the accounts of Jesus' Prayer at Gethsemane, she makes it clear that "there is no logical obstacle to assuming that the disciples could have heard something before falling asleep, or even to the supposition that there might have been more about which we know nothing because sleep intervened".

But the main point of her article is a possible witness, the clue of which we have evidence already in the Markan description. We read about the young man who followed him and narrowly escaped being arrested himself (Mk 14.51–52). Saunderson rightly asks the question "Is there any possibility that the young man could himself have been at Gethsemane while Jesus was praying?". She analyses the

suggestions of various scholars about this young man. ‘A curious sightseer’, ‘John Mark’, ‘a stranger’, ‘someone who lived nearby’ and ‘a man who was later converted to Christianity and whose memories thus became part of the tradition’ are some of them. She also takes note of the “numerous speculations” which “emphatically invalidate the suggestion that the youth could have been within earshot of Jesus’ prayer”.

Later on she talks about the dress of the young man, which possibly made some scholars deduce that ‘he was in haste, either without time to dress, or with a sheet in lieu of more conventional clothing’. The words used in this context ‘γυμνός’ and ‘σινδών’ are open to more than one interpretation. γυμνός which has been taken to mean ‘naked’ also means ‘wearing only a χιτὼν/ tunic’. She takes σινδών to stress the substance of which the garment was made and thereby not to consign the youth to bed to account for him wearing a piece of linen. She observes the word συνηκολούθει and suggests that it is “grammatically compatible with his being present at the moment of the arrest and therefore at Gethsemane”.

Later she argues that ‘solitude on the Mount of Olives was likely to be difficult to find that night’. Also, ‘it is difficult to make a case for there being no pilgrims near Gethsemane’. Thus she establishes the fact that it is impossible to assume that there was no historical evidence for the prayer at Gethsemane. This opens a new avenue for considering the eye-witness for the Gethsemane prayer. This study could help to establish the historicity of the words spoken at Gethsemane.

3. J.W.Holleran:

J.W.Holleran in his *The Synoptic Gethsemane. A Critical Study* (1973) wants “to determine as closely as possible the specific meaning which the authors of these accounts intended them to bear in the context of their own gospels” (Holleran 1973: 1).

Holleran gives special attention to ἕως θανάτου (Mk 14.34). He lists the four possible meanings—‘until death’, ‘sad to death’, ‘so sad I could die’ and ‘so sad I want to die’—which are supported by different scholars. He concludes that “the final temptation, which Jesus overcame in prayer to his Father, was the wish for peaceful and premature deliverance from his fate” (:16). While allowing ‘more than literal meaning’ of ‘stay awake’, he does not feel it right to stretch ‘too far’ to refer to the *parousia* as done by C.K.Barrett (:17). He would be inclined to think this exhortation of Jesus to his disciples to mean that they should not let the *habhura* come to an early close.

Holleran notes that “Jesus prays...not simply to be spared the sufferings of the approaching hour, but to be delivered according to the Father’s will from the hands of those to whom he is betrayed” (:22). Quoting Daube, Holleran acknowledges the fact that the threefold pattern namely acknowledgement, wish and surrender is more comparable to Judaism than to the Lord’s Prayer. The abrupt change from the singular in Mk 14.37 to the plural in 38 is not unnoticed. The absence of the command ‘to pray’ is noticed in v.34 in contrast to v.38. He wrestles with

‘temptation’ next. Does it refer to an imminent or an eschatological danger or something of both? K.G.Kuhn has succeeded in tracing the roots of this notion of temptation as at once eschatological and imminent back to the pre-Christian Palestinian context represented by the sectarian literature discovered at Qumran (:39).

The dichotomy between flesh and spirit within man himself seems decidedly more pronounced both in Mark and in the Qumran writings than it is in either Paul or the Old Testament. The author suggests that “the meaning of Mk 14.38 is that God has gifted the elect with a willing spirit, but if this spirit is to prevail over their weakness before God as men of flesh, it must be active, as it is in Jesus, through the discipline of watchfulness and prayer” (:45).

Holleran identifies ‘striking echoes’ in Mk 14.40 of the Synoptic Transfiguration accounts. More parallels are identified in the accounts of Luke. He feels that this exhibits “a stage in the development and interpretation of the tradition which prepares for the ultimate disappearance in John of the Gethsemane and Transfiguration accounts as individual scenes, and for the emergence in Jn 12. 23–30 of a fresh account containing features of both” (:47).

The passive voice in v.41, as in Mk 9.31 and 10.33, “emphasizes not only that Jesus is delivered up by one of his own disciples..., but also that he is delivered according to God’s design” (:63). He concludes that “‘into the hands of sinners’ stands as a

kind of mean between the sweepingly universal statement of 9.31 and the explicitly particular statement of 10.33” (:65).

Holleran goes along with the widely maintained view that the Gethsemane scene (Mk 14.32–42) did not originally belong to the Passion Narrative which antedated Mark and probably began with the arrest. The Gethsemane account itself has two conclusions. In 14.41 Jesus’ concluding words give an eschatological, Christological meaning to the scene, while in 14.42 his words bear a simple historical meaning, leading into what follows. The original conclusion of the story is in v.41. V.42 is an editorial addition.

Holleran argues that there is an irresolvable theological tension between the clear recognition by Jesus of his death as God’s salvific plan for human beings on the one hand, and the anguished struggle to accept the hour which he prays may pass him by on the other.

Matthew abbreviates Mark’s account of the prayer by omitting the indirect form of the petition for the passing of the hour (:72). Holleran tries to find out whether Matthew has complete dependence, immediate literary dependence or mediate dependence. His hypothesis is as follows:

The modifications of Mark’s text which we would anticipate from its presentation and exposition in community life and worship are systematically realized in Matthew’s text. These anticipations may be specified as follows: (1) the individualization of pericopes, (2) the symmetrization of account, (3) the simplification of language, style and ideas, (4) the dramatization of narratives, and (5) the assimilation of the whole to community experience (:159).

Holleran concedes that “in addition to the influence of the Lord’s Prayer in assimilating features of the Gethsemane account to the Christian liturgy, we must consider in the second place the influence of the Eucharistic symbolism itself” (:166). He argues further that “not only the faith of the community expressed in its liturgical preaching, but also the very experience of its worship in the Eucharist has exercised a recognizable influence in the interpretation of Mark’s Gethsemane scene and its reshaping in Matthew’s account” (:168).

Nothing of Jesus’ need and desire for the disciples to be with him in his hour, as expressed by Mark and Matthew, comes through in Luke. Here Jesus struggles alone without them. And his exhortations and rebuke show only his concern for their weakness before the trial facing them, not for their failure in facing his with him.

βούλομαι represents the will as resulting from reason and reflection, θέλω the will as arising from natural bent or desire. The contrast is intended between the resolute predetermined and immutable counsel of God and the natural inclination of the human will of Jesus. Luke has made clear by linguistic means what is not so clear in the parallels: namely, that the struggle of Jesus in prayer is not simply to align his will with that of the Father (v.42b), but rather to grasp whether the drinking of this cup of rejection, suffering and death is genuinely the design (εἰ βούλει) of God for him and for his mission.

Holleran agrees to the authenticity of vv.43 and 44 due to the confluence of different evidence. He sees Jesus as a martyr being strengthened for his struggle and receiving

‘some fresh insight into the necessity of his passion’. Even in the ‘image’ of flowing blood, he sees the martyr-theme expressed. According to Holleran, the hypothesis of a single common Synoptic source on the basis of which each evangelist developed his own expansions, is hardly maintained with any seriousness. Many hold that Luke is an editorial abbreviation (and expansion in the case of vv.43f) of Mark. However, in Holleran’s view, Luke’s account is

A literary presentation, characteristically Lukan, of a prototype which underwent sufficient development in the tradition to be regarded as a special source, distinct from Mark or the source of Mark to which it is related, and to which Luke added in turn vv.43f. from a parallel tradition shared with John and Hebrews. Thus Luke’s account represents a third independent tradition of the prayer-struggle of Jesus before his passion (:198).

In Source A (Mk 14.32, 33b, 35, 40–42a), the basic structure, the concluding saying and the individual details exhibit the Christological character and significance. There is no resolution to Jesus’ prayer, no answer, no surrender. In Source B (Mk 14.33a, 34, 39, 36–38), the behaviour of the disciples in response to the demand and example of Jesus is very important. It reveals the basically paraenetic character of the account. It is a call to moral action. Here we have a theology not so much of Christ’s passion as of the passion of his members.

However, in the context of Mark’s Gospel, it has a different emphasis. The separation of the three disciples from the rest remains without resolution. An immediate Christian interpretation of Jesus’ distress through Old Testament texts could be effected because of the juxtaposition of vv.33b and 34. By the juxtaposition of vv.35 and 36 Mark effects an exegesis of the prayer about the hour through the

prayer about the cup. Mark builds the scene into a triple process. Due to this, the meaning of vv.40 and 41a is affected. Mark's addition of v.42b serves not only as an editorial link with what follows but as an exegetical comment on what precedes.

In Matthew 26.36–46, Jesus is contrasted with the disciples. Separation from the eight, separation from the three, and finally expectation of the one make this very clear. Matthew's account shows greater interest in Jesus' prayer than Mark's. The disciple's sleep is more of a contrast motif. In Matthew's account Jesus tends to place less emphasis than Mark upon the role of the disciples.

Luke's account is centred on the theme of prayer under trial. Jesus is separated from the disciples. The physical distance from them is symbolic of the spiritual separation. Luke omits any mention of the disciples' flight. Luke actually leaves us with the impression that all the disciples, with the sole exception of Judas, have stood by Jesus as witnesses of his passion. Luke has sharpened the paraenetic thrust of the account.

B. Narrative Studies of Gethsemane:

1. W.S.Lawrence:

W.S.Lawrence, III in his Ph.D. thesis *Reader-response criticism for Markan narrative with a commentary on Mark 14:26–52* approaches the Gethsemane passage from a reader-response perspective. He argues that “the rhetoric of the Gethsemane

scene is dominated by contrast and by an undercurrent of eschatology” (Lawrence 1994:228). He further notes

Jesus appears to be anxious and the Three appear to be without anxiety, the exact opposite of the contrast in 4:35–41. The image of Jesus in Gethsemane, in fact, stands in contrast to his image in the Second Gospel up to this point. Gethsemane’s surprising turn must stimulate the reader to look more deeply into the text for ways to understand the relationship of this scene to the earlier portrayals (:228).

Lawrence also notices another contrast between vv. 33–36 and vv. 41–42. While Jesus is anxious and reveals his will over against the will of God in the earlier section, in the second section he looks resolved, confident and eager to go ahead. Prayer is the reason for this change, of which the readers are called to take notice.

2. J.P.Heil:

John Paul Heil in his article “Mark 14, 1–52: Narrative Structure and Reader-Response” (Heil 1990:305–332) divides the whole chapter into 9 scenes in 3 sets of intercalations. They are arranged centring around three events, namely, Anointing for burial, Prediction about betrayal and Acceptance of death through prayer. Heil tries to establish “what this intricate narrative structure of successive intercalations causes its reader to experience in order to produce the meaning latent in the text and thus to bring its act of communication to completion”.

In each set the reference to the places and the time is taken very seriously as having significant connotations. The contrasts between friends and enemies, plotting leaders and happy followers are important to explain the narrative significance.

In the first section (vv. 1–11), the plot of Jewish leaders, the anticipation of the death of Jesus during the meal and the plan of Judas to betray Jesus form the coherent group. The second section (vv. 12–25) consists of the direction given to prepare the Passover meal, prediction by Jesus of betrayal, and sharing the triumph over death through the Passover meal. In the third section (vv. 26–52), we see the prediction of Jesus about the abandonment by the disciples, Jesus' acceptance of death through prayer and Jesus' arrest, betrayal and abandonment.

Heil claims that the way each scene is described and arranged is to convince the readers of the scriptural fulfilment in the life of Jesus and in turn, the fulfilment of the words of Jesus themselves. Through this structure, Heil argues that the reader "experiences a succession of alternating scenes which form a network of intercalations involving the theme of opposition to and separation from Jesus on his way to death on the one hand, and the theme of close union with Jesus on his way to death on the other hand".

3. E.K. Broadhead:

E.K. Broadhead (1994) wrote a book entitled *Prophet, Son, Messiah. Narrative Form and Function in Mark 14–16*. He claims that the Gethsemane story in Mark "provides a focused commentary on earlier images of Jesus" (Broadhead 1994:88). He summarises the comparative analysis as follows:

The Gospel of Matthew replicates the use of the material in Mk 14.32–42, but it also creates an echo of the Lord's Prayer. The Gospel of Luke employs this echo and uses the account to call the disciples to watchfulness and to prayer. The Gospel of John uses selective elements of the Gethsemane material to

develop the Johannine concept of the 'hour'. In Polycarp the material is used to counter heresy and to encourage faithfulness. This comparative type of diachronic analysis shows the narrative potential of the Gethsemane material; this story is capable of performance in a wide range of narrative contexts and is able to generate sharply differing images of Jesus (:108).

4. M.Kiley:

Mark Kiley in his essay entitled "'Lord, Save My Life' (Ps 116:4) as Generative Text for Jesus' Gethsemane Prayer (Mark 14:36a)" (Kiley 1986:655–659) suggests that "part of one of the Hallel Psalms offered material to the early church with which to elaborate Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives".

He makes this suggestion because of the reflection of the cry of the psalmist in Ps 116.4 in Jesus' cry in Mark 14.36a. Both have the context of the plea for rescue from death. So he makes the suggestion that the early church has used Ps 116.4 to help shape Jesus' prayer in Mark 14.36a. Mainly he quotes the study about the formative role of the Psalms in the Passion Narrative. He guesses that many of the events of Mark 14 could have been perceived by the early church to reflect the experience of the 'pray-er' of Psalm 116. He claims that the betrayal, denial and false witness, the focus on the cup and the anointing by the woman would have reminded the early communities of the experience of the just one of Psalm 116.

He remarks that Paul believed that the early common meal should contain reflection on the meaning of Jesus' death. Therefore, he suggests that the early church used the fourth verse of Ps 116 to fill in part of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. As he

summarises, he says that this thesis is necessitated partly by the difficulties of understanding the prayer as coming from first-hand witnesses.

5. D.P.Senior:

In his book *The Passion Narrative according to Matthew. A Redactional Study* (1975), D.P.Senior observes a few changes in Matthew from the Markan presentation.

On a broader literary level, the threefold division of the prayer of Jesus which is undeveloped in Mark blossoms into an explicit enumeration of the prayers and their contents. On a more theological level Matthew amplifies the parenetical value of the scene by connecting Jesus' instruction on prayer in ch 6 with the form and content of his prayer in Gethsemane. Thus Jesus is presented as a living example of the filial obedience to the will of the Father disclosed in the Lord's Prayer. The explicit notation of the presence of the apostles and the exhortations "to watch with me" underline the value of Jesus' example for the community. In addition Matthew heightens a theme provided by Mark that in the act of handing Jesus over into the hands of sinners the divinely ordained suffering of the Son of Man begins (Senior 1975:118f).

6. L.A.Ruprecht:

In his article "Mark's tragic vision: Gethsemane" (Ruprecht 1992:1–25) Louis A. Ruprecht sees the Gospel as a *tragedy*. At the outset he gives an illustration of the story of *Oedipus* which was written by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. The story lies in the telling. Even though Oedipus' Destiny was different because of his character, his Fate remains always the same. A temptation, a prayer and a betrayal are the three components of the story of Gethsemane. The Gospels are best understood as tragedies. Then the author examines all the four Gospels individually.

In every performance Jesus' prayer is qualified by the theological interests of the story-teller.

Luke's performance: Luke wants a world in which God's will is all in all. God is subject, grammatically and otherwise; we are object. In the anticipation of suffering lies the strength to endure it ('anticipatory resoluteness'—Heidegger). Our own wills are transformed by God's. The distance between Jesus and his students (the author prefers the word 'students' to 'disciples') steadily increases. God does not wish to take the suffering cup away. The reasons are predestinate, because there is no destiny where there is no (personal) will.

Matthew's performance: For Matthew, prayer is seen to reconcile the individual to the painful and burdensome will of God. Here, the resoluteness is earned, not just anticipated. The progression in Jesus' spiritual reasoning is quite clear. Whereas Jesus' first prayer *wonders* what is possible, his second prayer *concludes* that it is not possible for the cup to pass. At the end, all mention of Jesus' will has disappeared. His singular role is that of the obedient servant. Tension and ambiguity typify Matthew's performance. Matthew's is the most explicitly Incarnational of the four performances of the *mythos* which later became the base for the creeds at Nicea and Chalcedon. Jesus is *two* things, at once.

John's performance: According to John there is no really logical or consistent connection between the agony Jesus experiences in Gethsemane and Jesus' clarity of purpose. There is no absence of clarity anywhere in the Johannine portrait of the

Christ. His will is his Father's. The Father is with him always. Jesus is a hero of astonishing resolve. It is only the crowd that wavers. He commands Peter to sheathe the sword "The cup which my Father has given me—shall I not drink it?". John retains only the betrayal. There is no prayer, no temptation. The very phrase which had lent such poignancy to the Synoptic Passion Narrative is used now in a voice dripping with irony.

Mark's Performance: Is this the story of one man's *necessary* collision with the religious and political authorities? Or is this the story of one man's encounter with a world he did not make, a Will not his own, and his anguished attempts to incorporate these things into his Destiny? Mark uses the passive voice frequently. In Mark, Jesus addresses a God who is mysteriously distant "Abba, *the* Father" (Grassi 1982: 449–58). For Luke, Jesus' Father did not wish to take the cup away. For Matthew, the cup cannot be avoided. But Mark leaves the theodicy in its starkest form, and entirely unanswered. Jesus' last agonised prayer meets only with the awful loneliness of some dark recessed corner in a broken world, the dreadful silence of heaven.

Tragedy is about Destiny, not Fate. At least since Shakespeare, it is taught that tragedies end badly. But it was not so important to the Greeks, how a tragedy ended at all. There are 'tragedies' which end well. Tragedy attempts to wrestle with the uncommon notion that there are two wills at war in the world. Certain things are *necessary*. Fate has to be gradually accepted and embraced, if never fully understood.

Luke's performance of the Passion seems to miss much of the tragedy, for the simple reason that Jesus' future is all Fate. John misses this because his theology cannot allow for two wills in the world, nor for a divided picture of Christ. In Matthew, and more clearly in Mark, the tragic understanding of Destiny is pointed out. Gethsemane is the necessary prelude to the desperate cry from the cross. There is a terrifying identity between Jesus and his students. Mark's Gospel is a tragedy which paves the way for a happier ending which is to come. Tragedies can be *resolved*, although they do not really *end*. There were three men on crosses. But the Cross was a Destiny to one only.

C. Theological Studies of Gethsemane:

I. R.Feldmeier:

R.Feldmeier in his *Die Krisis des Gottessohnes* (1987) holds that the Gethsemane pericope is the key to understand Mark's Passion Narrative. Gethsemane is a crisis in the life of the Son of God. Jesus had continual communion with his Father throughout. However, in Gethsemane the situation is different. From Gethsemane till Jesus' death the divine silence persists. Jesus questions the necessity of his passion before he accepts it as God's will. Gethsemane prepares the reader for the following narrative. This narrative shows that God is the one who delivers his own Son into the hands of sinners.

Accepting Mark as the earliest tradition, Feldmeier affirms how Matthew and Luke have softened the Markan presentation. He further argues that it is difficult to establish a literary dependency of Heb 5.7–10 even though it refers to Gethsemane. Comparing the Johannine references, he concludes that John was familiar with the basic elements of the Markan pericope. He argues against the objections to the unity of the Markan pericope and argues in favour of its historicity. In contrast to Kelber and Holleran, Feldmeier emphasises the relationship of Mk 14.32–42 to the Passion Narrative. He holds that the various elements in the pericope are best understood against the background of the Old Testament and Palestinian Judaism. In one way this makes it difficult to see the connection between the passage and its Markan context. He makes it clear that only in Mark Jesus seeks the comfort of human fellowship and only here is the ‘will of God’ a difficulty. The paradoxical coexistence of the absolute trust of Jesus in the Father and the experience of abandonment Jesus had are clearly noted in his work.

2. B.L.Mack:

In his book *A Myth of Innocence. Mark and Christian Origins* (1988) B.L.Mack gives a different approach for the origin of Christianity. Even though some of the conclusions are partial, there are many important aspects to learn from his treatment of the New Testament. One aspect is to do with our ignorance about the clear picture of First Century Christianity. The attempt to summarise different scholars’ viewpoints is a helpful one. Another aspect which is immediately relevant to our

present study is the link between the Martyr and the Righteous One in understanding the death of Jesus.

Mack, while talking about the Christ myth, makes some important points about the concept of Martyrdom.

The mythologization of the effect of this noble stance runs in two directions: the martyr is vindicated or rewarded by means of a post-mortem destiny, and the cause for which the martyr died is also vindicated, usually by saying that martyr's death undid the designs of the tyrant and restored the peace. In 4 Maccabees the cause was, of course, the law; ... In the mouth of the martyrs one finds prayers to God to "regard" their endurance under persecution and their willingness to "give their lives for" the law as "sacrifices" worthy of both forms of vindication (:105).

He further writes that the emphasis of Sam Williams (*Jesus' Death as Saving Event*, 1975) on the sacrificial aspect of the martyr's death has been challenged by David Seeley's dissertation (*The Concept of the Noble Death in Paul*, 1990). According to Seeley, the martyr myth is from the Greek tradition of the noble death; honour and obedience are the source of motivation rather than self-sacrifice. Mack would like to argue that "Heroism unto death, self-sacrifice, and cults of the dead were not old Jewish ideals" (:106). Rather, he would search with George Nickelsburg in the Hellenized version of an old Jewish Wisdom tale for this emphasis on the vindication of the martyr. He adds that "both 4 Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon combine this story with the Greek tradition of the noble death, placing the faithful righteous ones in the hands of tyrants, emphasizing the importance of faithful obedience to the law, and affirming that, though killed, the righteous ones and their cause will prevail" (:107).

Mack quotes the work of Dormeyer which differentiated the profile of the martyr from the profile of the Righteous One (*Die Passion Jesu als Verhaltensmodell*, 1974). Summarising Dormeyer, Mack writes

Both the Righteous One and the martyr find themselves pressed by enemies. There are taunts, charges, and threats of death. The Righteous One, however, complains of a plot, betrayal, and false charges, for he is innocent. He prays for protection in his hour of need, but is brought to silence in the presence of his accusers. There is no formal trial, and the plot against him does not result in his death. He is rescued. The martyr, on the other hand, comes to speech before his enemies who have power to charge him with civil disobedience and execute him. He does not complain, refuses solace, and dies with honor (:262).

He concludes that Jesus was martyred as an offender against the laws of the Jews while he was innocent according to the “laws” of the “kingdom of God”. Against Nickelsburg, Mack supposes that Mark did not use the story of the Righteous One ‘to enhance a suffering servant role for a pre-given view of Jesus as the Messiah-king’. Rather, he would think that Mark ‘intentionally recast *every pre-given* profile associated with the titles he used for Jesus’ (:268) (italics mine).

As he discussed the temptation in Gethsemane, he mentions the two characterisations of the Righteous One in the persecution plot. They are (1) ‘the innocently accused Righteous One who fears falling into the hands of his persecutors and falls silent before them, vulnerable and helpless, calling upon God for his rescue’ and (2) ‘the warrior who marches into the line of fire for a righteous cause, accosts his captors, and faces death with resolve as a martyr’.

In the case of Jesus, at Gethsemane, these attitudes are merged. The prayer is like the Righteous One in distress; the decision is that of a martyr. During the trial, Jesus is silent and outspoken. As he carries the cross, Jesus is portrayed both as weak and as strong. Mack goes further to say that “on the cross Jesus is both destitute (the words of desolation) and imperious (the outcry as he dies)” (:307). According to Mack, the cup is the cup of martyrdom; the hour is the hour of innocent suffering.

Mack holds the view that “in order to integrate the several traditions about Jesus and the Christ into a single and comprehensive narrative, Mark used the story of the obedient martyr” (:356). Moreover, he adds that “his narrative design was such that the story of wisdom’s martyr provided the warp into which the traditions of Jesus and the Christ could be interwoven to result in a new mythic tapestry”. According to him, Jesus “performed as a solitary figure, a superhero who knew that his inaugural announcement of the time of the kingdom would involve his crucifixion as an unavoidable prelude to an eventual, final vindication and victory. Thus the story of the martyr was incorporated into an apocalyptic view of history”.

If we take the book as a whole, the methodology followed by Mack gives rise to some difficulties. History is viewed mainly from a sociological and a literary perspective. A clear dichotomy between historical report and literary fiction seems characteristic of *The Myth of Innocence*. There seems no space for the value system of a community or the belief systems. Simple history which does not embrace the value and evaluations of the people cannot be a comprehensive one. In other words, to understand the whole truth, the premise of analysis protected by logic is not

enough. So, if history wants to claim to be true, it has to embrace the aspects of value system and evaluation which are not always necessarily logical. Negating the idea of apocalypticism seems a characteristic of Mack; this needs some questioning. Jesus is considered less an apocalyptic prophet than a Cynic sage. The Hellenistic background is emphasised over against the Jewish background.

In the study of Mack, we are reminded very emphatically how limited is our knowledge or even source of knowledge for first-century society or movements. So, one has to fill in many gaps in the process of reconstruction. It is more dangerous just to stick to one aspect of the truth, for example, sociological and literary interpretation, and to claim the authenticity of truth.

3. F.Martin:

Francis Martin in the article “Literary theory, philosophy of history and exegesis” discusses the Gethsemane narrative in detail. He argues that “we are dealing with something that ‘really happened’” (F.Martin 1988:579). He takes the multiplicity of the New Testament witnesses and the unlikelihood of the creation of such a scene as main reasons for his argument. Martin argues further that “the best way to penetrate and present the inner meaning of the event was to give it a particular literary shape which indicated the relation between Jesus’ definitive act of submission to the Father and the present situation of the church” (:581). According to Martin, the event was shaped or configured on the norms and theological judgements of New Testament times.

As he proposes a descriptive interpretation of Mk 14.32–42, he writes,

There was a moment when Jesus Christ made a decision to embrace what he clearly perceived to be the will of God, his Father, for him. This moment came shortly before his arrest in Gethsemane. It was a moment of human decision. Within the confines of humanity, someone made an act of submission to God in which the Absolute is revealed in a contingent act... Without that decision, the rest of the Passion would have been fruitless (:588f).

Martin envisages a twofold hermeneutical spiral in a historical investigation. They are (i) Explanation – historical and philological disciplines trying to understand the utterance of the text and (ii) Understanding. For Martin, the category of poetry is also very important. He would like to argue that the Markan text is a poetic text because the text explains by narrating. He also takes this text as an example of an aspect of human communication – ‘the influence one person has on another in the movement of the mind in grasping truth’ (:600).

The fact that we are dealing with something that really happened is a significant assertion here. For Martin, theological judgements of New Testament times are vital in understanding the Gospels. The interaction between the definitive submission of Jesus and the state of the church has to be understood well to appreciate the meaning. For him, the Gethsemane narrative of Mark comes under the category of poetry, an aspect of human communication, which enables people to grasp the truth.

4. R.S.Barbour:

R.S.Barbour gives suggestions about the place of the Gethsemane incident in the Passion Narrative as a whole (Barbour 1970:231–51). He argues that the temptation

of the disciples in Gethsemane and the hour of the Son of Man are understood by Mark alike in its 'historical and eschatological senses'. Barbour would like to admit that Mark's telling of the Passion story might have been influenced by the 'blind faith' of Abraham and the willing offering of himself by Isaac if Aqedath Yizhaq was influential in early Christianity. He holds that Jesus' agony is stressed in Matthew less than in Mark (:238). He further argues that "In Matthew Jesus has the power to summon divine assistance (xxvi.53) of angel warriors, which implies that he has the power to frustrate God's purposes, but he will not do so, for 'how then would the scripture be fulfilled?' (xxvi.54)" (:238). He claims that the paraenetic emphasis is stronger in Luke than in other Synoptic Gospels. Temptation is one of the important examples for him. It is worth quoting Barbour to understand how he saw the relationship between different accounts of Gethsemane.

In all three Synoptic Gospels the scene is told in honour of the Son of Man and to show how he has trodden the appointed path of suffering, not to emphasize that he is a man like us (as in Hebrews). Mark has ignored the contrast, so obvious and so difficult to some modern exegetes, between Jesus' attitude to his death throughout the rest of the narrative, especially in the Last Supper *perikope*, and his agony and prayer to be delivered from the hour, or the cup, in Gethsemane. Luke, who perhaps has some psychological interest at this point, has softened this contrast by recourse to the martyr theme. In John what remains of it has become a revelational theme. Jesus' prayer remains a datum for which no explanation beyond the imminence of death is readily forthcoming; and the testing which he and the disciples are undergoing is not further explained (:242).

5. R.E.Brown:

R.E.Brown in his *The Death of the Messiah* (1994:177) notices the interrelation of the Synoptic Gethsemane accounts. He writes

Overall the accounts of the prayer in Matt and Luke soften the starkness of the Marcan Jesus. Both of them omit the prayer about the hour that was phrased in indirect discourse, perhaps judging Mark to be tautological. (From it Matt does preserve the clause “if it is possible” and makes it the introduction to the cup prayer; he then negates the clause and uses it as a preface to Jesus’ second Gethsemane prayer in 26:42: “if this cannot pass”) Even though all three Synoptics report Jesus’ prayer about the cup, the way in which they preface it shows increasing softening of the demand:

Mark 14:36: “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible”

Matt 26: 39: “My Father, if it is possible”

Luke 22: 42: “Father, if you are willing”

Brown concedes that the equivalents of “Father, let your will be done” from the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine “Father, glorify your name” are “parallels drawn from early Christian prayer patterns known to us in the Lord’s prayer” (:177). Brown seems to be sure that the early Christians understood Jesus’ prayer in terms of the hour and the cup. Further he claims that “they fleshed out the prayer tradition in light of the psalms and of their own prayers, both of which they associated with Jesus’ way of praying. Each evangelist (and his tradition before him) knew different forms of that tradition, and each developed it differently both before and in the course of fitting it into his narrative” (:226).

6. K.Madigan:

K.Madigan recently wrote about the ancient and high-medieval interpretations of Gethsemane (Madigan 1995:157–173). He argues that there is ‘essential continuity’ between ancient and medieval thought. He rightly brings to our attention that the

high-medieval interpreters had not only to interpret the problematic text of Gethsemane; but also to grapple with the patristic interpretation of Gethsemane.

Madigan succinctly puts the tension in his following words.

The fathers were in deep conflict about this text, however, and some uttered comments on it which seemed, to medieval eyes, quite heterodox. One of the burdens of high-scholastic exegesis was to preserve the fathers from doubt about their unanimity and orthodoxy. Moreover, medieval exegetes also needed to bring their own interpretation into harmony with the fathers, to evolve their own readings out of the words and putative intentions of the saints (:158).

Madigan enlists the Christological problems in Gethsemane. The first one is Jesus' apparent doubt and ignorance. According to Madigan, Ambrose admits that Jesus doubts as a man doubts; but Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas hold the view that doubt implies fear, ignorance and error on the side of the doubter. Another difficulty was raised from Jesus' thrice repeated prayer. He further continues that Augustine was confident enough to state that Jesus wished for something other than what the Father willed.

The intensity of Jesus' grief and fear is another painful difficulty the interpreters have to tackle. The way Jesus collapses in the garden is the most moving spectacle in the New Testament. Madigan argues that Jesus' "lonely nocturnal vigil in Gethsemane appears to be marked neither by sovereign control of his destiny nor by serene assurance of divine oversight, but by helplessness and loss of control" (:160). The collapse of Jesus under the heavy weight of his grief, the fervour of his anguished

pleas for deliverance and his exasperation with the failure of his disciples are equally problematic for Madigan.

Madigan argues for a redaction of a Markan original and argues that “In the hands of Luke, the grieving and fearful Jesus is transformed into a Socratic figure of equanimity and poise in the face of death, one whose soul not even the most appalling suffering can vex” (:161). He further writes that the Gospel of John has included 12.27 “only to ridicule the weakness of the Markan Jesus and to assert the sovereignty, obedience, and serenity of the Johannine Jesus” (:161). Therefore, he concludes that this taming of the wilder elements of the texts continues in history. For him, it was Luke and John who inaugurated this trend in the history of interpretation.

That is, the domestication of the text begins almost immediately, within the canonical period, or, speaking from a postsixth-century perspective, within the New Testament codex itself. It is a trend that only a few would resist over the course of the next thirteen centuries (:161).

D. Conclusion

Collins emphasises the allusion of Psalms and Jonah in Gethsemane. She holds that the Passion Narrative is profoundly different from Greek and Latin accounts. Hellenised readers of pre-Markan Passion Narrative would have been disappointed with the Markan picture of Jesus which was distinctly different from the serene picture of Socrates and his imitators. Saunderson convincingly argues that it is impossible to assume that there was no eye witness for the prayer at Gethsemane.

Holleran agrees with Daube in comparing the prayer pattern of Gethsemane with Judaism rather than with the Lord's Prayer. He identifies the echoes of the Transfiguration narrative in the Gethsemane narrative. Holleran recognises an irresolvable theological tension between Jesus' recognition of his death and his struggle to accept the hour. He agrees to the Matthean dependence on Mark.

For Lawrence, Gethsemane is the exact opposite of Mk 4.35-41. The anxiety and lack of anxiety are exchanged between Jesus and the disciples in these incidents. Heil argues that the reader completes the act of communication through the narrative structure of anointing, prediction and acceptance of death through prayer. The themes of opposition to Jesus and the close union with Jesus are there to convince the reader that everything happens as scriptural fulfilment.

For Broadhead, the Gethsemane story in Mark "provides a focused commentary on earlier images of Jesus". He emphasises the narrative potential of the Gethsemane material, its capability of being used in different narrative contexts and its ability to make sharply differing images of Jesus. Kiley's difficulty to conceive first-hand witnesses of Gethsemane makes him argue that the early church used the Hallel Psalms to elaborate Jesus' prayer.

Broadhead and Senior argue in their works for a closer link between the Lord's Prayer and the Gethsemane Prayer. Senior holds that Matthew amplifies the paraenetical value of Mark. For Ruprecht, Matthew's presentation is the most explicitly incarnational and it became the basis for Nicean and Chalcedonian creeds.

As Ruprecht understands the Gospel as a tragedy, the distinction between destiny and fate is crucial for him. Luke and John miss much of the tragedy. The more clear tragic understanding of destiny is to be found in Mark.

Feldmeier concedes that Matthew and Luke have softened the Markan presentation. He argues that the various elements of the Gethsemane pericope can be better understood against the background of the Old Testament and the Palestinian Judaism. Mack holds that to understand the death of Jesus, the link between the Martyr and the Righteous One is important. The cup of martyrdom and the hour of innocent suffering come together in Mark. Mack emphasises the Hellenistic background over against the Jewish background.

Martin argues that the Gethsemane narrative of Mark comes under the category of poetry. The Gethsemane narrative reflects an interaction between Jesus' act of submission and the situation of the early church. Barbour argues that Mark's telling of the Passion story was influenced by the Abraham-Isaac story which was prevalent in early Christianity. The relationship between different accounts of Gethsemane is taken seriously in his work. The contrast between the Gethsemane narrative and the rest of the narrative in Mark with regard to Jesus' attitude to his death is very clear for him. He also recognises that both Jesus and his disciples undergo a test at Gethsemane.

Working with a Markan priority Brown also conceives of the starkness of Mark being softened down by Matthew and Luke. He claims that each evangelist knew

different forms of prayer tradition and each developed it as suited to his narrative. In Madigan's viewpoint, the taming of wilder elements in Gethsemane like fear, grief, helplessness and loss of control was inaugurated by Luke and John, and it continues in the history.

This survey does not exhaust all the writings about Gethsemane in the last twenty-five years. As we have mentioned, the studies which address the specific issue of Gethsemane will be discussed in the related sections. In the various studies reviewed we have seen some studies which concentrate on the literary aspects of the Gethsemane narrative. Some others look at the narrative structure and related issues of the narrative. Still others pay much attention to the inter-relatedness of the varied accounts and the theological and Christological issues connected with it.

While some studies are deeply involved in tracing the sources of each and every word, other studies accept the different presentations of the Gethsemane incident as due to the varied purposes of the writers. Some writers have hinted at the link with other people who also prayed before death. However, a concerted effort to look at the Gethsemane prayer in the light of the prayers and the speeches before death or martyrdom is lacking. Such a study would take into consideration both the need of the writer to write such an account and the truth of the matter which lies behind the whole issue. Hence the need for the present study.

Chapter Three

PRAYERS OR SPEECHES BEFORE DEATH OR MARTYRDOM

A. Introduction

As we start to look into the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane, we become aware that some of the patterns found there are to be found in other literature too. It is not just to do with the literary resemblance. In some cases there are striking similarities in the theme as well. On the one hand, we have examples where people complain about their unjust treatment, curse the persecutors, or pray to God for vindication. On the other hand, we have examples of strong people who face their death courageously, settling their day-to-day affairs peacefully, or with the strong sense of conviction that that is the way they had to go.

In this chapter we will concentrate on four specific characters, namely, Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp. The example of Polycarp belongs to a period later than that of Jesus. Yet we have chosen this just to find out how a Christian martyr is portrayed as having spoken or prayed during the last minutes of his life.

If we go back to a historical survey of the Bible and other religious writings, we get a varied picture. In the case of the Patriarchs (we will talk about Isaac in relation to extra-biblical and Targumic writings separately), we get almost a unified picture of a peaceful death. People who underwent an unjust death have been portrayed in a

different way. The prophets who felt the threat of death reacted and prayed in yet another way. In the life of the martyrs under persecution, we see a different link between prayer and death.

Abraham (Gn 25), Isaac (Gn 27), Jacob (Gn 49), Moses (Dt 30,31), Samuel (1 Sm 25) and David (1 Ki 2) die at an advanced age charging their household with blessings and responsibilities before they die. Blessing others has been considered more essential than praying for themselves or for their own cause. Probably, prayer was not thought of as a need at all at the time of death.

At the same time, we also need to take note of a few other examples like Abel (Gn 4.10ff), Urijah (2 Sm 11, 12) and Naboth (1 Ki 21.13f,18f). These examples could be broadly called the premature death of righteous people. They are not portrayed as praying to God or defending their case. Their lives are taken away without giving any warning to them at all. So, the Lord or the prophet takes up the case on behalf of the deceased and the murderers are punished.

In the Psalms of David and the Book of Job, God is asked to explain the reason for the undeserved death (and suffering), or prayer is offered to deliver them or in vindication. In the case of Jeremiah, he prays to God to vindicate him when he felt the threat of death (Jr 18.19–23). Azariah prays to God for deliverance just before his threatened death (Pr of Azariah 1.20–22).

In the case of the Jewish martyrs, we see a clear willingness to die even if death is undeserved. More than prayer, victorious speech was considered suitable before the accusers. A few questions come to mind at this point. Why should there be a prayer just before death, especially in connection with undeserved death? Is resurrection an answer to the righteous suffering and death, and was this concept developed to tackle the question of righteous suffering? The second question will not be followed up since it is not directly connected with our study.

Before looking into the main characters, a few remarks are in place about someone who accepted his death as God-given and at the same time uttered curses to his opponents. Also, a few remarks are in order about Job and Jeremiah whose views about their death are also worth noting. We shall also look at the Martyrdom of Isaiah at the end.

Job's speech on death and loss:

Job when faced with all the disasters in his life complains to God. We read in Job 3.11–12, for example, “Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? Why were there knees to receive me, or breasts for me to suck?”. Further in verse 23, we read “Why is light given to one who cannot see the way, whom God has fenced in?”.

It is a good example to see how someone who believed in God has turned into someone who questions God. It is a book which tries to find meaning for the suffering of the righteous.

Jeremiah's prayer before his death:

When men were plotting against Jeremiah and were inventing charges against him, Jeremiah came to the Lord and said:

Remember how I stood before you to speak good for them, to turn away your wrath from them. Therefore give their children over to famine; hurl them out to the power of the sword, let their wives become childless and widowed. May their men meet death by pestilence, their youths be slain by the sword in battle. May a cry be heard from their houses, when you bring the marauder suddenly upon them! For they have dug a pit to catch me, and laid snares for my feet. Yet you, O Lord, know all their plotting to kill me. Do not forgive their iniquity, do not blot out their sin from your sight. Let them be tripped up before you; deal with them while you are angry (Jr 18.20–23).

When we notice the last sentence, “Do not blot out their sin...”, it looks just the opposite to some examples like Eleazar or Jesus. There is no trace of hidden meaning about his death or suffering. The suffering is faced as it is without attributing any meaning to it.

The Martyrdom of Isaiah:

Charles holds the view that the Martyrdom of Isaiah belongs to the first century mainly because of the quotation by *Opus Imperfectum*, Ambrose, Jerome, Origen, Tertullian, Justin Martyr and possibly the Epistle to the Hebrews. He claims that it is

unlikely that the works written by Jews in the second century should attain to circulation in the Christian church (Charles 1913: 2.157).

The accusation of the false prophet Belchira against Isaiah is as follows. (1) The prophecy against Jerusalem and the cities of Judah that they might be laid waste and they might go into captivity. (2) Claiming to see more than Moses the prophet – ‘I have seen God and behold I live’. (3) Calling Jerusalem Sodom and the princes of Judah and Jerusalem people of Gomorrah.

The Martyrdom of Isaiah 5.9–14

And Isaiah answered and said: ‘So far as I have utterance (I say): *Damned and accursed be thou* and all thy powers and all thy house. For thou canst not take (from me) aught save the skin of my body’. And they seized and sawed in sunder Isaiah, the son of Amoz, with a wood-saw. And Manasses and Balchira and the false prophets and the princes and the people (and) all stood looking on. And to the prophets who were with him he said before he had been sawn in sunder: ‘Go ye to the region of Tyre and Sidon; for for me only hath God mingled the *cup*’. And when Isaiah was being sawn in sunder he neither cried aloud nor wept, but his lips spake with the Holy Spirit until he was sawn in twain.

The words of curses by Isaiah in 5.9 have to be noticed. He says that the powers and the house of Jerusalem are damned and accursed. Probably this shows his anger too. It is in no way related to indifference or forgiveness which usually could be seen in the case of some of the martyrs. Moreover, here Isaiah considers the death as the ‘cup’ which God has mingled and it is only for him and not for other prophets. He considers this a special status and undergoes his martyrdom without crying or weeping. It is written that he spoke with the Holy Spirit. Now, we will look into the accounts about the four people we have chosen.

B. Binding of Isaac

Our first example is Isaac. Here we are not dealing with the context of real death. It should be kept in mind that Isaac did not die immediately after this instance. In the Targumic evidence, we have a tradition where Isaac was considered an archetypal martyr – a lamb of sacrifice, even though not killed, yet fully and completely offered. It is not our intention here to discuss the origin of Isaac's story in the book of Genesis.

It is essential to pay attention to the various evidences of the "Aqedah (Binding) of Isaac". The incident recorded in Gn 22 plays a very significant role in Jewish theology. The faith and obedience of Abraham are the crux of the whole narrative. The Targums of the Pentateuch give detailed interpretations and specifically with an emphasis on Isaac. However, the important question to be addressed is the date of the traditions.

The following could be a useful primary source for the study of the Aqedah of Isaac: Gn 22 from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Palestinian Targums namely the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Tg.Ps.-J.), The Fragmentary Targum (Frg.Tg.), The Paris Manuscript 110 (MS 110) and The Vatican Codex Neofiti (Tg.Neof.) (On Ex 12.42 and Gn 22), The Book of Jubilees, 4 Maccabees, 4Q225, Jewish Antiquities by Flavius Josephus, Biblical Antiquities by Pseudo-Philo and some references from the New Testament like Heb 11.17–18, Ja 2.21–23, Rm 8.32, etc.

We are not just concerned about the expiatory elements of the binding of Isaac. Rather, our concentration would be to establish the meaning and significance of the binding of Isaac during the first half of the first century CE and to look at the various interpretations of the binding of Isaac.

We read in *Jewish Antiquities*, 1.232

The son of such a father could not but be brave-hearted, and Isaac received these words with joy. He exclaimed that he deserved never to have been born at all, were he to reject the decision of God and of his father and not readily resign himself to what was the will of both, seeing that were this the resolution of his father alone, it would have been impious to disobey; and with that he rushed to the altar and his doom. [LCL, Tr. J.Thackeray]

The words of Isaac here are very interesting for those who are familiar only with the canonical scriptures. He voluntarily accepts to be sacrificed. The words 'he went immediately' say much about his attitude towards something agreed upon by God and his father. It is important to note the absence of binding in the writings of Josephus. Franxman rightly argues that

This tradition of willing co-operation which is mirrored by Josephus' version of things may have resulted from a feeling that Isaac, if he were everything he should have been, need not have been tied up in order to force him to do something he should have been happy to perform on his own. In any case, Josephus takes Isaac's willingness to several extremes, including the omission of any mention of binding at all (Franxman 1979:160f).

In the Fragmentary Targum (W) to Gn 22.14, the prayer of Abraham is written in the following manner.

And A[braham] worshipped and prayed in the Name of the *memra* of the Lord and said: "You are the Lord who sees, but who is invisible; I beg mercy from before You; everything is manifest and known before You [including] that there was no division in my heart at the time that You told me to offer up Isaac my son, and to make of him dust and ashes before You; rather, I

immediately rose up in the morning, and I performed Your word with joy, and I fulfilled the word of Your mouth; and now, I beg mercy from before You, O Lord God; when the children of Isaac enter into an hour of oppression that you will remember for them the binding <of> Isaac their father, and release and forgive their sins, and redeem them from all distress; for the generations that are destined to rise after him will say: 'On the mountain of the Holy Temple of the Lord, Abraham offered up Isaac his son; and on this mountain, which is the Holy Temple, the *'iqar š^ekhinta* of the Lord was revealed'". [Tr. M.L.Klein]

The primary importance is given to the devotion and obedience of Abraham. There was no division in his heart to make Isaac dust and ashes before God. Davies and Chilton point out that the dust and ashes refer to the Tamid, not the Passover (Davies & Chilton 1978:541). Abraham prays that the Binding of Isaac may be remembered by God to loose and forgive the sins of Isaac's sons and to redeem them from all distress.

Two things have to be taken into account here. One is, that the offering of Abraham was accepted without the actual offering of his son. The second important matter is, that the description about Abraham itself is strong enough to prove the prevalence of the story during Philo's time. That is to say that Isaac's prayer is not the only source for us to help our study. The prayer of Abraham talks about the 'offering up' of Isaac in spite of the fact that Isaac was not literally offered.

According to Philo (Philo, IV, *Abr.*, 177),

So Isaac was saved, since God returned the gift of him and used the offering which piety rendered to Him to repay the offerer, while for Abraham the action, though not followed by the intended ending (εἰ καὶ μὴ τὸ τέλος ἐπηκολούθησεν), was complete and perfect (ὁλόκληρος καὶ παντελής), and the record of it as such stands graven not only in the sacred books but in the minds of the readers.

In the description of Philo, three aspects have to be highlighted. 1. The offering was complete and perfect. 2. Abraham's action was not followed by the intended ending. 3. The record of it is graven in the minds of the readers (not only in the sacred books). It is significant to note that even an unfinished action was perceived as complete and perfect by God. As it is written in the sacred books, people also got this story engraved in their minds.

In this context, it is worth noting another reference of Philo in *II., Sac., 110*, where he refers to Isaac as one of the 'undivided sacrifices' (ἀμερίστοις θυσίαις) and the 'whole burnt-offerings' (ὅλοκαυτώμασιν). Isaac was considered as an undivided sacrifice and a whole burnt-offering because of the undivided attitude of Abraham and Isaac. Jesus was a pious Jew brought up with the strict religious practices. Therefore, it is possible that this idea was available to Jesus, a young Jew of the first century.

The story of Abraham and Isaac is more pronounced in Pseudo-Philo than Josephus and Philo. Davies and Chilton underestimate the willingness of Isaac which is described in *Biblical Antiquities*. The following are the relevant sections from Jacobson's translation (Jacobson 1996).

Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (LAB) 32 and 40

32.3. The son said to the father, 'Hear me, father. If a lamb of the flock is accepted as an offering to the Lord as an odor of sweetness and if for the sins of men animals are appointed to be killed, but man is designed to inherit the world, how is it that you do not say to me, "Come and inherit a secure life and time without measure"? What if I had not been born into the world to be offered as a sacrifice to him who made me? Now my blessedness will be

above that of all men, because there will be no other. Through me nations will be blessed and through me the peoples will understand that the Lord has deemed the soul of a man worthy to be a sacrifice.'

32.4. When he had offered his son upon the altar and had bound his feet so as to kill him, the Lord hastened and sent forth his voice from on high saying, 'Do not slay your son, do not destroy the fruit of your belly. For now I have made you known to those who always malign you. Your memory will be before me always, and your name and his from generation to generation.'

40.2. Seila his daughter said to him, "Who is there who would be sad to die, seeing the people freed? Or have you forgotten what happened in the days of our fathers when the father placed the son as a burnt offering, and he did not dispute him but gladly gave consent to him, and the one being offered was ready and the one who was offering was rejoicing? (Tr. by H.Jacobson).

The willingness of Isaac to be sacrificed is so predominant in this section. Isaac gladly consented and considered it a great privilege since God has accepted him as a sacrifice. In 40.2, the statement 'the one being offered was ready and the one who was offering was rejoicing' has been the centre of Jewish exegesis of Aqedah (Horbury 1981:169–171).

However, the statement "Now my blessedness will be above that of all men, because there will be no other" (32.3) has been a point of discussion among scholars. Davies and Chilton think that this "cautious phrase may well testify to the author's awareness of Christian claims concerning Christ's atonement as efficacious for all men" (Davies & Chilton 1978:526). Jacobson emphasising this argument goes further to say "This sounds like polemic against the Christian view that the sacrifice of Isaac was nothing more than a precursor of and model for the genuinely significant event that was the sacrifice of Jesus" (Jacobson 1996: 2.867).

Even though the binding of Isaac is not treated as a whole in 4 Maccabees, its references to Isaac's binding are of utmost importance. The following examples portray how the model of Isaac was so strong in the minds of the Maccabean martyrs.

By reason like that of Isaac he rendered the many-headed rack ineffective (4 Macc 7.14).

Remember whence you came, and the father by whose hand Isaac would have submitted to being slain for the sake of religion (διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν) (4 Macc 13.12).

For his sake also our father Abraham was zealous to sacrifice (σφραγίσαι) his son Isaac, the ancestor of our nation; and when Isaac saw his father's hand wielding a knife and descending upon him, he did not cower (4 Macc 16.20).

The main references in the New Testament about the Aqedah are given below: Rm 8.32. "He who did not spare his son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" The beginning of the verse resonates with Gn 22.16 "Because you...have not withheld your son". In Heb 11.17–18, it is written "By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, of whom he had been told, 'It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named after you'". The blessings come to the descendants through Isaac. James 2.21 reads as follows: "Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?". While Daly emphasises the certainty of these references to Aqedah tradition, the point has to be noted that all the above three concentrate more on Abraham than on Isaac.

According to G. Vermes, the story of the Binding of Isaac 'became the corner stone of the whole Jewish theology of the love of God' because of Abraham's consent to offer

his only son to God (Vermees 1961:193). R.J.Daly holds that the following three significant points have to be noted in Gn 22 (Daly 1977:45):

- (1) The rejection of human sacrifice.
- (2) The traditional identification of Mount Moriah with the mount of the Jerusalem Temple.
- (3) The faith-obedience relationship of Abraham with God.

While Daly builds his thesis on the propositions that reference is made to the Aqedah in pre-Christian Jewish sources and that it is reflected in the New Testament, Davies and Chilton challenge those propositions and give a different story of the development of the Aqedah tradition (Davies & Chilton 1978:514–546).

While the principal actors of the Biblical narrative are Abraham and God, the Targumic sources shift the emphasis to Isaac. Three studies by R.J.Daly, P.R.Davies & B.D.Chilton and G.Vermees could be discussed here because of their significant contribution to the subject.

R.J.Daly gives a detailed account about the different references to Aqedah. Daly shows how the Genesis account of the sacrifice of Isaac has been developed in the midrashic haggadah and later on it became the centre of the Jewish sacrificial soteriology. He rejects the suggestions of I.Levi and H.J.Schoeps that Aqedah is in the background of Pauline soteriology. He concedes that there is a proven relationship between the Aqedah and the New Testament. Further he argues that the

sacrificial soteriology of the New Testament cannot be discussed without reference to the Aqedah. Daly admits that “the theology of Aqedah had, through the writings of Philo, Pseudo-Philo and Josephus—to say nothing of possible direct influence through the medium of the Palestinian Targum—become quite accessible to Christian writers by the beginning of the second century A.D.” (Daly 1977:75).

P.R.Davies concedes that “the Jewish doctrine of the *Aqedah* (=binding) regards the Offering of Isaac, narrated in Gen, as an actually accomplished sacrifice in which blood was shed, constituting a definitively expiatory or redemptive act for all Israel” (Davies 1979:59). Davies argues that there is no evidence for a pre-200 CE date for the connection of the Aqedah with Passover. He claims that the representation of Jesus as a Passover lamb was just because of the fact that Jesus was crucified at Passover time.

After a brief discussion of the Palestinian Targums, he asserts that “there is no evidence in Jewish sources of the *Aqedah* prior to the New Testament period. Nor is there within the New Testament even any direct comparison between Isaac and Jesus” (:66). Davies concludes that the development of the Christian atonement doctrine and the development of the Jesus-Isaac typology in the second century CE resulted in the development of the Aqedah-Passover link. He refutes the studies of Vermes and Daly in a considerable way.

J.C.O'Neill poses two important questions to Davies and Chilton. Firstly, he asks why should the Jewish thinkers introduce “the idea that Isaac in taking the wood on



his shoulders took on his *cross*. Why did they make the parallel as specific as this, when there was no need to refer to crucifixion at all in their counter-propaganda?” (O’Neill 1981:14). Secondly, he asks why should the Christian thinkers attach the propitiatory suffering of Christ “to someone in the Old Testament who did not in fact die. The lamb caught in the thicket would have been more obvious”. These two aspects are part of their thesis. Therefore, O’Neill argues that “It is only likely that they would compare Christ to Isaac if actual martyrs, who also offered their lives as propitiatory sacrifices, had already been compared to Isaac in pre-Christian Judaism”. He further holds that all details of the cross sayings fall in line if Jesus was referring to the sacrifice of Isaac (:14).

G.Vermes argues for an Aqedah theology where “the remission of sin, as well as present and future salvation, were due to the unique sacrifice of Isaac”. According to him, “the Passover was not only the annual commemoration of his sacrifice, but also a joyful reminder of its first decisive fruit and a prayer to God to bring about the final salvation of man” (Vermes 1961:226). He tries to prove the impact of the Aqedah tradition on the Christian doctrine of Redemption.

To prove his thesis, he argues for the following four aspects.

1. The two main targumic themes of the Akedah story, namely Isaac’s willingness to be offered in sacrifice and the atoning virtue of his action, were already traditional in the first century AD.
2. Genesis xxii was interpreted in association with Isaiah liii. That is to say, the link between these two texts was established by Jews independently from, and almost certainly prior to, the New Testament.

3. The theological problem which apparently led to the creation of this exegetical tradition was that of martyrdom.

4. The tradition must consequently have established itself some time between the middle of the second century BC and the beginning of the Christian era (:204).

Vermes summarises his argument saying “the Akedah theme, bound, as in Judaism, to the Servant motif, belongs to the oldest pre-Markan stratum of the Christian *kerygma*. It is reasonable, therefore to wonder whether Jesus himself was conscious of his destiny as being the fulfilment of Isaac’s sacrifice” (:223). He believes that Jesus personally applied the Akedah tradition to himself. He even calls for a re-examination of the Transfiguration account in the light of the Targumic version Akedah “the heavens were let down and descended and Isaac saw their perfection” (:223).

A recent article of Vermes (1996) refutes the claims of Davies and Chilton with the help of 4Q225. This was given the title ‘Pseudo-Jubilees’ due to its similarity to the Abraham section of the Book of Jubilees.

4Q225

I ... (8) And a son was born af[ter]wards (9) [to Abrah]am and he called his name Isaac. And the prince Ma[s]temah came (10) [to G]od and accused Abraham on account of Isaac. And [G]od said (11) [to Abra]ham, ‘Take your son, Isaac, [your] only (son) (12) [whom] you [love] and offer him to me as a burnt offering on one of the ... mountains (13) [which I will tell] you’. And he ro[se and he we]n[t] from the wells to Mo[unt Moriah]. (14) ... And Ab[raham] lifted up II (1) his [ey]es [and behold there was] **a fire**. And he placed [the wood on Isaac, his son, and they went together]. (2) And Isaac said to Abraham, [his father, ‘Behold there is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb] (3) for the burnt offering?’ And Abraham said to [Isaac, his son, ‘God will provide a lamb] (4) for himself’. **Isaac said to his father, ‘B[ind my hands]...’ ... (5) the holy angels standing (and) weeping over ... (6) his sons from the earth. And the angels of M[astemah] ... (7) were rejoicing**

and saying, ‘Now he (Isaac) will be destroyed ... (8) whether he will be found weak and whether A[braham] will be found unfaithful [to God. And he (God) called,] (9) ‘Abraham, Abraham.’ And he said, ‘Here am I’. And he said, ‘... (10) he (Abraham) is not a lover (of God).’ And the Lord God blessed Is[aac all the days of his life (cf. 4Q226 7.3) and he begot] (11) Jacob, and Jacob begot Levi (in the) [third (cf. 4Q226 7.4)] genera[tion. And all] (12) the days of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Lev[i were ... years] (Translation and annotation by G.Vermes 1996:141–143).

4Q225, dated 30 BCE –20 CE, includes the following elements: consent of Isaac, Isaac asking to be bound, presence and crying of angels and the merit of Isaac. From this strong evidence, Vermes reiterates his earlier point that the story of Aqedah was developed before Jesus. His arguments sound convincing.

Vermes admits the possibility of Jesus thinking himself as the ‘fulfilment of Isaac’s sacrifice’. However, the important difference we argue in this study is that Jesus thought of his offering in line with Isaac’s offering. That is to suggest that Jesus knew in his inner heart that he did not have to die literally. His wholehearted acceptance of the offering was enough. The intended ending did not need to follow the intention to be offered up. We are not suggesting this as a definite solution. However, the uncertainty expressed in the Gethsemane prayer and the cry of dereliction at the cross compel us to consider this option seriously.

If the Aqedah tradition with its expiatory meaning was prevalent at the time of Jesus, it is bound to have so much impact on Jesus too as he was a Jew. On the other hand, if this is a development in Rabbinic Judaism after the development of the Christian doctrine of atonement, the impact of it for our study is different. However, the

numbers of evidences persuade us to take the side that the tradition was already developed with additional meanings at the time of Jesus.

To summarise this section, the story of Abraham's offering of Isaac which is basically from Gen 22 has been elaborated in the Jewish writings in different ways. We mainly looked at the *Jewish Antiquities*, *On Abraham* (of Philo), *Biblical Antiquities*, *Fragmentary Targum* (W) and *4 Maccabees*. Pre-70 date for *Biblical Antiquities* is argued as convincingly as for a post-70 date. Even if we take the attestations of *Jewish Antiquities*, *On Abraham* and *4 Maccabees* alone, we have a strong tradition of Aqedah which was developed definitely during or before Jesus.

A question that is very important to our study is whether it is possible that Jesus, being familiar with the Aqedah tradition (Binding of Isaac), thought that his complete willingness was enough as a sacrifice and he need not be killed. The above question is relevant if we assume that Jesus considered his death a sacrifice. To extend the inquiry further, the cry of dereliction "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" could be taken as reflecting the disappointment of Jesus who thought he would be exempted from the crucifixion. The prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane could play a crucial role in this kind of interpretation. The contemplation of an escape by Jesus seems very real and is in agreement with God's dealing in the past in the life of the patriarch Isaac.

C. Socrates

In the search for people from antiquity who faced their death in a specific way, our next example is Socrates. Socrates was seventy years old when he was tried in Athens. Even though he did not compose any writings, his disciples have written much about him. Especially, Plato's writings are very important for inferring what happened during the trial and what arguments Socrates made to justify his case. Socrates drank the cup of hemlock in 399 BCE. The versions depicting the ordeal are varied. The description in *Phaedo* is a moving one.

For our purposes, the way Socrates understood his death, any prayers he prayed in that context and his attempt, or lack of it, to escape are important. We will consider this issue in the following sections.

1. The charges against Socrates.
2. The possibility of escape and refusal to take it.
3. Attitude towards death.
4. Prayer and last words before death.

1. The charges against Socrates:

Both Xenophon and Diogenes Laertius report the wording of the indictment by Meletus against Socrates almost similarly. It is worth noting the different versions of the indictment.

Diogenes Laertius 2.40

Socrates is guilty of not recognising the gods recognised by the city, and of introducing other new divinities. He is also guilty of corrupting the youth.

Xenophon, *Mem.*1.1.1

Socrates is guilty of rejecting the gods acknowledged by the state and of bringing in strange deities; he is also guilty of corrupting the youth.

Plato, *Apology* 24B–C

Socrates is a wrongdoer because he corrupts the youth and does not believe in the gods the state believes in, but in other new spiritual beings.

Shinro Kato notes the four significant differences between Plato and other two versions (Kato 1991:358). Whereas the versions of Diogenes Laertius and Xenophon emphasise the religious nature of the charge, Plato's version emphasises the educational charge. Kato concedes that the real reason for suspicion against Socrates was his close link with Critias, Charmides and Alcibiades; because Critias and Charmides were enemies and Alcibiades was a traitor of the democrats. To bring someone to the court of the King Archon for trial, a religious charge was essential.

Three charges are put against Socrates. (1) Refusing to recognise the gods that the state recognises (2) Introducing new divinities (3) Corrupting the youth. Socrates, on the other hand, tells that he will tell the whole truth. This assumes that his opponents have not told the whole truth. He says that Meletus and associates are not concerned about anything of which he accused Socrates. Instead, the charges are made due to older accusers and the widespread enmity towards him. In his defence, he further makes clear what is the true source for his charges. He makes reference to

the Delphic oracle and to his practice of questioning others. He proved that, being the one who admits his ignorance, he was the wisest and the others only pretend to know something. Due to this standpoint he gained many young followers and finally earned the enmity of many.

2. The possibility to escape and refusal to take it:

The punishment of death was demanded by the assailants Meletus, Anytus and Lycon. The death had to be by Socrates drinking the poison himself. Every year a sacred vessel sailed to Delos for the festival. The time between the departure and return of that vessel should be kept as a time of purification without any pollution; so the death penalty should not be performed during that period. Since the ship sailed a day before Socrates' trial in 399 BCE, he was kept in prison for a month. There was an opportunity to escape and even his friends suggested this.

Socrates gives reasons for obeying the law in the latter part of the dialogue. A.D.Woozley writes that Socrates uses a "What would happen if..." argument (Woozley 1971:315). The effect of a single disobedience to the law could not be equated with the effect of a mass disobedience. Woozley argues that only if all people disobey all laws could social disintegration come.

A. Barker, however, challenges the premise from which Woozley makes this analysis. The premise for Woozley's analysis is that "according to Socrates, the reason for never disobeying laws is that 'the consequences of disobedience are, or

would be, socially destructive’” (Barker 1977:14). Barker challenges the ‘claim that Socrates’ argument is one that relies on predictions about what would happen to the stability of society if he acted contrary to law’.

It is worth noting Socrates’ speech in *Crito* 48B–D

Then we agree that the question is whether it is right for me to try to escape from here without the permission of the Athenians, or not right. And if it appears to be right, let us try it and if not, let us give it up. But the considerations you suggest, about spending money, and reputation, and bringing up my children, these are really, Crito, the reflections of those who lightly put men to death, and would bring them to life again, if they could without any sense, I mean the multitude. But we, since our argument so constrains us, must consider only the question we just broached, whether we shall be doing right in giving money and thanks to these men who will help me to escape, and in escaping or aiding the escape ourselves, or shall in truth be doing wrong, if we do all these things. And if it appears that it is wrong for us to do them, it may be that we ought not to consider either whether we must die if we stay here and keep quiet or whether we must endure anything else whatsoever, but only the question of doing wrong. (Tr. H.N.Fowler, LCL)

Socrates was given advice by his friends to escape. However, Socrates drank the cup of hemlock voluntarily. He knew that the poison would kill him. In that case, could it be called suicide? Since suicide is an act of self-assertion, R.A.Duff writes, “it is wrong if and because it involves taking on myself a decision about my life or death which does not properly belong to me, thus arrogantly or ungratefully asserting my will against the state, or God, to whom I owe my life, and to whom that decision properly belongs” (Duff 1982–83:46).

Crito appeals to Socrates to escape for the following reasons. If Socrates does not escape, his friends will lose a friend such as they may never find again; the public

would blame his friends for being stingy and not saving Socrates with the help of money; Socrates would accomplish precisely what his enemies wished, that is to destroy Socrates; and his children would be deserted.

Barker sums up the reasons why Socrates did not escape in the following words:

Socrates refuses to try to escape from prison not because of some misguided belief that the results of such action would be socially destructive, but because the attempt would be ἄδικον. It would be ἄδικον because, regardless of its consequences, it would constitute a voluntary breach of agreement and a deliberate abrogation of the rights and functions of the πόλις. Why should we never do what is ἄδικον? Not simply because it is ἄδικον, wrong or immoral—there is no notion here of underived categorical obligation—but because to do wrong in the moral sense is to do harm where it matters most, harm to that part of us which enables us to perform our proper function as men. Not only Socrates, but his friends and indirectly his children too would be involved in wrong-doing, and hence would radically injure themselves, if the attempt were undertaken. The so-called harm which ill-informed public hostility can do them is of no significance by comparison, for the adverse opinions of others are to be feared only in so far as they are signs that we have done wrong (Barker 1977:27f).

3. Attitude towards death:

Christopher Gill analyses the description of the death scene by Plato in *Phaedo* (Gill 1973:25–28). He notices how Plato selects some features to describe Socrates' death. He concedes "Plato may have wished to show Socrates' physical toughness and stoicism, the control of his mind over his body which is also stressed in Alcibiades' speech in the *Symposium* (220a ff)" (:27).

Dorothy Tarrant enlists the metaphors of death in the *Phaedo* in an earlier article (Tarrant 1951:64–66). Plato uses the words 'to depart' to mean 'to die'. From

Homer, the usage of soul's departure to Hades was common. In *Phaedo*, ἀπιέναι, οἶχεσθαι, ἀποδημῆσαι are the main equivalents to denote death. Departure to Hades, departure to the presence of other gods, going home, release and escape to a better place and sleep are some of the main metaphors used by Plato to describe Socrates' conception of death. She takes the final words of Socrates mentioning the God of Healing as a reference to the coming journey (:66).

In *Apology*, it is a mistake to think of death as evil (40B–C). In *Laws*, life is not superior to death (VIII 828D). K.Dorter notes that

the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus* all suggest that the highest good for man is the ascent to wisdom, the unobstructed beholding of truth, but that this cannot be accomplished during life due to unavoidable restraints by our soul's corporeal prison; conversely all evil and misery is ascribed to the baseness of corporeal desires, which we are finally rid of in death (Dorter 1976:28).

Socrates is not talking of desirability of death only for philosophers. He gives the following reasons for people's struggle to hold on to life: Fear of the unknown, enjoyment of the pleasures, the sense of accomplishment and importance, and the belief that one's death will make life more difficult for others. Moreover, we read in *Phaedo* 68B–C

“Then is it not”, said Socrates, “a sufficient indication, when you see a man troubled because he is going to die, that he was not a lover of wisdom but a lover of the body (φιλοσώματος)? And this same man is also a lover of money and of honour, one or both.”

Xenophon, *Apology*, 9

I shall prefer death to begging meanly for longer life and thus gaining a life far less worthy in exchange for death.

Apology, 12

Does not the very priestess who sits on the tripod at Delphi divulge the god's will through a 'voice'?

Apology, 26

And I get comfort from the case of Palamedes, also, who died in circumstances similar to mine; for even yet he affords us far more noble themes for song than does Odysseus, the man who unjustly put him to death.

Apology, 27

"What is this?" Hermogenes reports him as asking, "Are you just now beginning to weep? Have you not known all along that from the moment of my birth nature had condemned me to death?"

4. Prayer and last words before death:

Socrates asked the servant who gave poison to him whether he could make a libation out of the cup to any god. When that man answered that the poison was not enough for that sake, Socrates made his last prayer before his death. This is recorded in an indirect form in *Phaedo* 117B and reads as follows: "I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to that other world—even so—and so be it according to my prayer". B.D.Jackson notes that a prayer to unnamed gods is not characteristic of Socrates even though he observes one more of this kind in *Philebus* 25B (Jackson, 1971, 18). He also notices the overall scepticism of Socrates about human knowledge of divine names (*Crat.* 400E–401A, *Phaedr.* 229C–230A).

In any case, it should be noted that Socrates is praying gods to prosper his journey from this world to the other world. At this point, it is worth noting the emotional

stature of Socrates too. The cup of poison is being handed over to Socrates. Socrates 'in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes,...as his manner was, took the cup' (*Phaedo* 117B).

Phaedo continues telling the story to Echecrates, as it is recorded in Plato's dialogues, 'Holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison'. When his friends saw him drinking the poison, they could not bear it; especially, Apollodorus who broke out into a loud and passionate cry. Phaedo says that Socrates alone retained his calmness. Fearlessness, cheerfulness and calmness are some of the main descriptions of Socrates as he faced his death.

One more spectacular event happens before his death. Those are the last words of Socrates. "Crito, we owe a cock to Aesculapius. Pay it and do not neglect it" (Tr. LCL). After those words there were no more words from this man. Socrates' final words sound astonishing. A great philosopher who even dies for his philosophy is talking about something ordinary as he dies. A few observations are in order.

After drinking the hemlock, the chill moves up from Socrates' feet. It is at this moment he tells Crito these words. It looks a paradoxical statement. Asclepius (or Aesculapius) is the god of healing. In what way does the context of Socrates' death evoke an offer of a cock to Asclepius? We need to notice here that Plato who wrote the words of Socrates would not have any need to distort the last words of his

master. Moreover, the words of Socrates would not have been forgotten by those who were around him.

The traditional interpretation has been that “Socrates is thanking Asclepius for healing him of the sickness of life by the cure of death” (Most 1993:100). However, nowhere in the dialogue does Socrates talk of life as illness and death as its cure. On the contrary, in his conversation to Cebes, Socrates holds the view that the entrance of the soul into the human body is in some sense a disease and it “finally perishes in what we call death” (*Phaedo*, 95D). In that sense, death is the final destruction (ἀπολλύοιτο) of the soul. Metaphorical interpretation is not in order for these final words.

G.W.Most accepts the interpretation that Socrates is thanking Asclepius for someone’s rescue from illness. Further Most argues that it could be that he experienced a clairvoyant vision in which Plato recovered from his sickness. It is clear from *Phaedo* that Plato was not present during the final ordeal of Socrates due to his sickness. The assumption is that it could have been an illness because of which the disciple could not have been with the master at the crucial moment.

It also has to be noted that a cock is a poor man’s offering. Therefore Most concedes that “even in his dying moments Socrates remains true to the ideal of αὐτάρκεια which had characterized him throughout his life and which was to become a fixed element in his later reputation” (Most 1993:109). The clarity of his emotions and mind right at the last minute is reflected in his last words.

Socrates' prayer to prosper his journey from this world and his final words about giving a cock to Asclepius are crucial for our study. They reflect the way Socrates took and understood his life and his death. Socrates was portrayed by Plato as being very keen to obey the law of the land. His standpoint has been 'convince or obey'.

A few linguistic comparisons also could be sought after between *Phaedo* and the Gospels. Even though the word κύλιξ is used in *Phaedo* and ποτήριον in the Gospels, the literal usage of 'drinking of the cup' in the case of Socrates and the metaphorical usage of the 'drinking of the cup' in the case of Jesus catches our attention. If the story of Socrates was familiar in first century Judaea and Galilee, it is just possible that Jesus was influenced by the story of Socrates. Otherwise, it is possible that the Gospel story was influenced by the story of Socrates.

It is possible to think that Mark, Matthew and Luke are aware of the story of Socrates as told in *Phaedo*. The phrase 'ὡςπερ εἰώθει' in *Phaedo* 117B (LCL transl: 'as was his custom') brings to our memory 'κατὰ τὸ ἔθος' in Lk 22.39. The friends of Socrates felt as if they were left behind after the death of Socrates as orphans. Jesus told his disciples according to Jn 14.18 that he will not leave them as orphans. The comparison of ideas could be made between *Phaedo*'s words in 117C "for it was not for him that I wept, but for my own misfortune in being deprived of such a friend" and Jesus' words in Lk 23.28 "do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children".

In *Phaedo* 118 we read “Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, who was, as we may say, of all those of his time whom we have known, the best and wisest and most righteous man”. The words near the cross “Truly this man was God’s son” (Mt 27.54 and Mk 15.39) and “Certainly this man was innocent” (Lk 23.47) are in some sense reflecting the end of a story such as that of Socrates. It is important to note that the Lukan version is very close to *Phaedo* verbally.

At the same time, the words of Socrates “for I have heard that it is best to die in silence. Keep quiet and be brave” (*Phaedo* 117D) are just the opposite to the loud cry of Jesus with the words “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” reported both in Mark and in Matthew. Luke also talks about the crying with a loud voice. Instead of the words of desperation, Jesus in Luke commits his spirit into the Father’s hands. This particular difference and the word ‘righteous’ in Luke put Luke in a special relation to the description in *Phaedo*.

In the writings about Socrates we see a strong example of a man facing his death courageously. To sum up, we have observed in this section the perseverance of Socrates to convince his opponents about the charges against him. As it was impossible, Socrates decided to accept the punishment of death. He was not persuaded by his friends to escape this death. He totally rejected the idea of escaping. The prevalence of Plato’s writings in first century Judaea and Galilee is highly probable. Therefore, the influence of the story of Socrates on the first century writers is perceivable. This has a significant bearing on our study about the

Gethsemane prayer in which we have Jesus thinking aloud of an escape if it is his Father's will.

The Prevalence of Greek Language and Culture in the Land of Israel

(During the First Century)

The language of Galilee, Samaria and Judaea in the first century is of great concern for New Testament scholars for different reasons. Our primary interest in this section is to find out whether the story of Socrates was available in the culture of Jesus. Among many writings, we will concentrate on the ones that discuss the role of Greek in the land of Israel.

G.Dalman in his acclaimed *Jesus-Jeshua* (1929) quotes so many Greek attestations. The designation of Caesar as θεός instead of *Divus*, the Greek finger-posts, the coins with Greek titles and the Greek names of the towns and strongholds are some of the examples which Dalman gives. The title on the cross in Greek, Latin and Hebrew (Lk 23.38) is definitely an indication of the prevalence of Greek in Jerusalem. Since Mary was related to the priestly family in Judaea (Lk 1.36) and Joseph was from the city of David (Lk 2.4), Dalman argues that Jesus "could not have lived in isolation from the influence of Greek" (:4).

While agreeing that there was a wide use of Greek in administration and commerce, Günther Bornkamm in his *Jesus of Nazareth* holds the view that "we find no trace of the influence of Greek philosophy or the Greek manners of living" in the life of Jesus (Bornkamm 1969:54). This looks unrealistic.

Argyle argues that “the fact that so characteristically Jewish an institution as the Sanhedrin derived its name from the Greek word συνέδριον is an indication of the deep influence of the Greek language even in the very heart of Palestinian Judaism” (Argyle 1973:87).

Many scholars admit that Jesus and his disciples could have been bilingual, speaking both Greek and Aramaic. Selby argues that there are so many flaws in the Aramaic hypothesis and there is enough evidence to concede that Jesus and his disciples are bilingual (Aramaic and Greek). He writes that “Aramaic was, for bilingual Jews of Galilee of the first century, the language of the home, whilst Greek was more frequently the language of the street” (Selby 1983:192).

Greek-speaking gentiles were definitely among Jesus’ audience. The doubt of the Jews in Jn 7.35 strongly implies that Jesus knew Greek very well. The Jews said to one another “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?” At least we can deduce that John believed that Jesus could speak Greek to the extent of teaching others. Barrett (1978:325) argues that διασπορά in Jn 7.35 denotes the dispersed people. Ἑλληνες is believed to denote the Greek speaking Diaspora Jews in John.

Beyer draws our attention to the fact that “the extensive archive of the Jewess Babata from Machosa south-east of the Dead Sea (93–132 A.D.) contains Hasmonean Nabatean and Greek documents, but no Hebrew” (Beyer 1986:43).

The works of Meyers and Strange bring to the front some of the important archaeological discoveries (Meyers & Strange 1981). Reviewing their book, D.L.Mealand writes that “Greek was largely the language of the urban élite but spread to the Aramaic speaking countryside later” (Mealand 1982:545). Among the inscriptions on ossuaries, two-thirds are in Greek. In our context of tracing the influence of thought patterns and ideologies, the following section is important from Meyers and Strange.

At Ptolemais someone erected a Greek inscription dedicated to Zeus-Soter in 130 B.C.E. Another from that same city and same century B.C.E. celebrated the names of Hadad and Atargatis. From Samaria comes a Greek dedication to Serapis and Isis dated 201 B.C.E. Another of the second century B.C.E. lists the priests of Zeus Olympius in Samaria. From the first century B.C.E. we have graffiti from Eleutheropolis (biblical Maresha), a statue from Bashan dedicated to Herod the Greek [sic] and dated 23 B.C.E., the Jason tomb in Jerusalem and its Greek graffito (“Rejoice, O living, and for the rest, drink and eat”), and others (Meyers & Strange 1981:80f).

This shows how far Greek and other religions have influenced Roman Palestine through the Greek language. The additions to the biblical books of Daniel and Esther and the works of Flavius Josephus that are in Greek are some examples of the literary activities in Greek.

To establish Jesus’ knowledge of Greek, Ross gives the following arguments (Ross 1990:42f). (a) Jesus being a skilled craftsman (Mk 2.15) was not from the lowest stratum of the Galilean society. (b) His parables show sufficient knowledge of the business of trade and government that presumes a knowledge of Greek. (c) Since several of his intimate disciples hold Greek names, they may be more familiar with Greek than Aramaic. Therefore, Jesus would have spoken in Greek as well as in

Aramaic. (d) Jesus spoke with people in the Greek-speaking area of Tyre, Sidon and the Decapolis (Mk 7.24–37). (e) There is no mention of an interpreter or a difficulty in communication in the context of Jesus' trial and therefore the trial must have been conducted in Greek.

Even though some of the premises from which Ross works here are still under discussion, evidence from different realms together give more probability of Jesus' knowledge of Greek. He attempts here to prove Jesus' knowledge of Greek from the difficult expressions – ἐπιούσιον and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Paul's quotation of a Greek proverb in 1 Cor 15.32–33 "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" is an indication of Greek being quoted in religious teachings too. Greek names of the disciples and the Seven in the Acts are other indications for Greek influence.

J.A.Fitzmyer gives a clear affirmative answer to the question "Did Jesus speak Greek?" (Fitzmyer 1992). He gives the following reasons for his certainty. (1) Jesus and Pilate seem to have engaged in some conversation during Jesus' trial (Mk 15.2–5 and parallels). The likelihood of Pilate, a Roman, knowing either Aramaic or Hebrew is less than Jesus knowing Greek. (2) Jesus' encounter with the centurion suggests that the conversation would have been in Greek (Mt 8.5-13 and parallels). (3) The meeting with the Syro-Phoenician woman implies that Jesus spoke Greek (Mk 7.25–30). (4) He also gives Jn 12.20–22 together with Jn 7.35 as another piece

of evidence. He concludes that Jesus probably was a trilingual with Aramaic as the dominant language.

It is also useful to note at this point the prevalence of Greek stories among Romans.

In Tusculan Disputations of Cicero (45 BCE), we read about the story of Socrates.

As Cicero talks about the imperishability of the soul, he adds

Influenced by these and similar reasons Socrates sought out no advocate, when on trial for his life, and was not humble to his judges, but showed a noble obstinacy derived from greatness of soul, not from pride, and on the last day of his life he discussed at length this very subject; and a few days before, though he could easily have been removed from prison, he refused, and then, with the fatal cup almost actually in his hands, he spoke in language which made him seem not as one thrust out to die, but as one ascending to the heavens (1.29.71).

Again in 1.41.97 and 98 he quotes extensively from Plato's *Apology* 40. The calmness of the spirit at the hour of death is the main concentration of his talk. Later he continues with examples of men and women who showed courage about death. Very specifically Cicero says that "Socrates' view on the subject is given clearly in the book which relates his death..." It gives a clear idea how much the book *Phaedo* was available to his readers. In 3.4.8, we read Cicero referring to Socrates as "the fountain-head of all modern philosophy that deals with life and conduct". The frequency of quotation by Cicero makes us wonder how strong was the example of Socrates in Cicero's world. In 5.14.47 he refers to "Socrates' well-known conclusion".

We see in Justin Martyr's *Apology* reference to Socrates and Plato. This gives us a clue to know how prevalent was the story of Socrates during the time of Justin Martyr in the Christian circle. In *Apology* 1.44, we read

So also Plato, in his words, "The blame is his who chooses, but God is without blame," took his saying from Moses the Prophet For Moses was before all the writers of Greece, ...

In *Apology* 1.46 we read

We are taught that Christ is the First-born of God, and we have shewn above that He is the Word of Whom the whole human race are partakers, and those who lived according to reason are Christians, even though accounted Atheists. Such among the Greeks were Socrates, and Heraclitus, and those who resembled them: of the Barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others; whose actions, or names, would I know be tedious to relate; and for the present I refrain from so doing. So also they who have been before Him, and lived without reason, were worthless, and enemies to Christ, and murderers of those who governed their lives by reason; but they who lived, and now live, in accordance with it, are Christians, and are fearless, and tranquil.

In *Apology* 2.10 we read

And they who were born before Christ, as to His Humanity, when they endeavoured to examine and confute things by reason, were dragged before the judgment-seats as wicked men, and busy bodies. He who was more active in this than all of them, Socrates, was accused of the same things as we are; for they said that he introduced new Gods, and did not acknowledge those whom the city considered as Gods. He, in fact, expelled from the polity the evil demons, and such as did what the Poets described; and he taught men to reject Homer, and the other Poets; and he exhorted them to gain the knowledge of the God Who was Unknown to them, by the investigation of reason; saying, "It is not easy to discover the Father and Creator of all things, nor when discovered is it safe to declare Him to all". This however our Christ did through His own power. For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for this doctrine. But in Christ, Who was known even to Socrates in part, (for He was, and is, the Word, Who is in every one, and Who foretold all things that were about to come to pass, both by the Prophets, and by Himself also; when He was made of like passions with us, and taught these things,) not only philosophers and grammarians put their faith, but even handicraftsmen, and such as were wholly uneducated, despising reputation, and fear, and death;

for it is the power of the Ineffable Father which does this, and not the powers of human reason.

Apology 2.13

And I confess that I both prayed, and strove with all my might, to be found a Christian; not because the doctrines of Plato are entirely different from those of Christ, but because they are not in all respects like them; no more in fact are those of the others, the Stoics, for example, and poets, and prose writers; for each seeing, through a part of the Seminal Divine Word, that which was kindred to those, discoursed rightly.

The Rabbis never mentioned Plato, Aristotle or any famous Stoics. Lieberman claims that “the only Greek philosopher of the pre-Christian era mentioned by name is Epicurus” (Lieberman 1963:130). However, there is evidence for a third century Synagogue in Caesarea where *Shema*‘ was recited in Greek (:131). Lieberman concludes that the major Rabbinic interest was only in the legal studies and the methods of rhetoric of the ‘Gentiles’.

Therefore, to say that Jesus was unaware of Greek culture or literature would be unrealistic. Socrates being one of the prominent philosophers of the Greeks had a great impact on Greek culture. Our purpose here is not to establish whether Jesus spoke Greek or not. Rather, we want to find out whether the culture and philosophy of the Greeks were available or not for a first century Jew. Again, we are not going to say that the culture and philosophy necessarily influenced Jesus. We completely agree with the ability of human beings to transcend their cultural and ideological background to any extent.

From the above discussion, especially from the archaeological studies, it is most likely that Jesus and the Gospel writers were exposed to Greek culture where Socrates figure was an important feature. The linguistic resemblance can be traced between Plato's writings and Synoptic Gospels as we have done earlier in this chapter. That too supports the prevalence of Greek literature or stories in the first century.

Discussing the phrase "after these not many days" in Acts 1.5 D.L.Mealand argues that there are close Greek parallels with this phrase. He has traced through the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) disc both the occurrences of "these many" and "after not many days" (Mealand 1991). This could be another possible example of Greek influence on Luke, a Gospel writer. Comparing Lk 1.1–4 with Diocles of Carystus' *Letter to Antigonus*, Demetrius' *Formae Epistolicae*, Hero of Alexandria's *Pneumatica I* and Galen of Pergamon's *De Typis*, L.Alexander argues that "the scientific tradition provides the matrix within which we can explore both the social and the literary aspects of Luke's work" (Alexander 1986:70).

Downing argues that the resemblances between the Cynics and the early Christians outweigh the differences. He has identified a long list of Cynic themes (from Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*], Dio, Lucian and Epictetus) which are also represented in the Jesus tradition (Downing 1988b). He concedes that "some early Christians and some radical pagan preachers (seen by others and by themselves as Cynics) would often have sounded alike to their hearers" (:ix). Downing argues that "the contacts between Jesus and John have 'Q' resembling a

Life of a (Cynic) philosopher rather more than it does any of the suggested non-Greek models” (Downing 1988a:202).

There was a poet and philosopher in Tyre who came from Gadara in Syria. His poems on himself, namely *Palatine Anthology of Greek poetic epigrams* 7.417–19 give evidence for his trilingual proficiency (Greek, Syrian and Phoenician) (OCD 1970:667).

At this stage it is essential to list a few Greek sayings which are also found in the Gospels. Even though it is a long list, it gives a clear picture of how much the writings of the Gospels have parallels in other contemporary writings.

Epictetus (50–120 CE), a contemporary of Plutarch and Tacitus, was a Stoic philosopher. He grew up as a slave of Ephaphroditus and he attended many of the lectures of Musonius Rufus. He taught in Rome and his follower Flavius Arrianus collected his lectures. Dio Chrysostomos (c.40–112 CE) was a Greek orator and a popular philosopher. He held Plato and Xenophon as his main models and Trajan was his friend. He was a contemporary of Plutarch and gives a good picture of the life of his days.

Diogenes Laertius, to whom *The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers (LEP)* is normally attributed, was from probably the first half of the third century. However, some of the work in it may go back to earlier times. Therefore, we have quoted a few from LEP also.

All things belong to the wise (Mt 11.27, Lk 10.22)

All things belong to the gods. The gods are friends to the wise, and friends share all property in common; therefore all things are the property of the wise (LEP 6.72)³.

Calves and wolves (Mt 10.16, Lk 10.3)

Those who live with flatterers he declared to be as defenceless as calves in the midst of wolves; (LEP 6.92)

Staff and wallet (Mk 6.8–9, Mt 10.10, Lk 10.4)

...Diodorus of Aspendus, who also let his beard grow and used a staff and a wallet (LEP 6.13).

Treasures (Mt 6.20, Lk 12.33)

As iron is eaten away by rust, so, said he, the envious are consumed by their own passion (LEP 6.5).

End of the earth (Ac 1.8, Mt 28.19–20)

For he bade me to keep on doing with all zeal the very thing wherein I am engaged, as being a most honourable and useful activity, “until thou comest”, said he, “to the uttermost parts of the earth” (Dio 13.9).

Consider the birds (Mt 6.26, Lk 12.24)

Consider the beasts yonder and the birds, how much freer from trouble they live than men, and how much more happily also, and how each of them lives the longest life possible, although they have neither hands nor human intelligence. And yet, to counter-balance these and their other limitations, they have one very great blessing—they own no property (Dio 10.16).

To convict and to reprove (Jn 16.8–11)

Accordingly, just as the good physician should go and offer his services where the sick are most numerous, so said he, the man of wisdom should take up his abode

³ Most of the following Greek and Latin references were traced with the help of Downing, *Christ and the Cynics*.

where fools are thickest in order to convict them of their folly and reprove them (Dio 8.5).

Narrow door (Mt 7.13–14, Lk 13.24)

There were two approaches to them from without, each having one. The path that led to Peak Royal was safe and broad, so that a person mounted on a car might enter thereby without peril or mishap, if he had the permission of the greatest of the gods. The other was narrow, crooked, and difficult, so that most of those who attempted it were lost over the cliffs and in the flood below, the reason being, methinks, that they transgressed justice in taking that path (Dio 1.67).

Love of money (Mt 6.24, Lk 16.13)

The love of money he[Diogenes] declared to be mother-city of all evils (LEP 6.50).

The lost sheep (Mt 15.24)

...if he lacks even the quality of a good shepherd, who takes thought for the shelter and pasturing of his own flock, and, besides, keeps off wild beasts and guards it against thieves; nay, if he is the very first to plunder and destroy them and to grant the same privilege to others as though they were veritable spoil of the enemy—never should I style such a ruler either emperor or king (Dio 3.41).

When brothers agree (Mt 18.19)

When brothers agree, no fortress is so strong as their common life, he said (LEP 6.6).

The first becoming the last (Mt 19.30, 20.16)

“Because,” said he, “after a little time down will be converted into up”. This because the Macedonians had now got the supremacy, that is, had risen high from a humble position (LEP 6.32).

...but if you hear him say “Master”, in the centre of his being and with deep emotion, call him a slave,... (Epict 4.1.57).

He has gone mad (Mk 3.21)

On being asked by somebody, “What sort of a man do you consider Diogenes to be?” “A Socrates gone mad,” said he (LEP 6.54).

He [Monimus of Syracuse, a pupil of Diogenes] often followed Crates the Cynic as well, and embraced the like pursuits; whereupon his master, seeing him do this, was all the more persuaded that he was mad (LEP 6.82).

God who sees in secret (Mt 6.4, 6.18)

Now the philosophers say that the first thing we must learn is this: That there is a God, and that He provides for the universe, and that it is impossible for a man to conceal from Him, not merely his actions, but even his purposes and his thoughts (Epict 2.14.11).

But when God himself is present within you, seeing and hearing everything, are you not ashamed to be thinking and doing such things as these, O insensible of your own nature, and object of God's wrath! (Epict 2.8.14).

Sent by God (Jn 4.34, 5.23, 6.44, 7.16, 9.4, 14.24, 20.21, etc.)

According to Epictetus (Epict 3.22.23), the true Cynic is the one who knows that he has been sent by Zeus to men to show them that they have gone astray.

Seek and find (Mt 7.7)

Seek and you will find that he differs in some other respect (Epict 1.28.20).

Witness (Acts 1.8)

As a witness summoned by God, God says, "Go you and bear witness for Me; for you are worthy to be produced by me a witness. ἔρχου σὺ καὶ μαρτυρησόν μοι (Epict 1.29.47).

Foxholes (Mt 8.20, Lk 9.58)

...behold, God has sent me to you as an example; I have neither property, nor house, nor wife, nor children, no, not even so much as a bed, or a shirt, or a piece of furniture, and yet you see how healthy I am (Epict 4.8.31).

By the fruit (Mt 7.16–20, 12.33–35, Lk 6.43–45)

Such a powerful and invincible thing is the nature of man. For how can a vine be moved to act, not like a vine, but like an olive, or again an olive to act, not like an olive, but like a vine? It is impossible, inconceivable (Epict 2.20.18).

Do you not realize the kind of men they are whose language you have just uttered? That they are Epicureans and blackguards? And yet, while doing their deeds and holding their opinions, you recite to us the words of Zeno and Socrates? (Epict 3.24.38).

Come now, do you also tell me your style of life, the one on which you have set your heart, you eager follower of the truth, and of Socrates, and of Diogenes! What do *you* want to do in Athens? (Epict 24.40).

Apart from the above, there are many writings of Seneca which are similar to the Gospel sayings. It is true that Seneca's writings are in Latin. However, we have quoted many of his writings because it reflects the close thematic links of different writings in the same period. We see as many overlapping of Biblical themes in Seneca as we saw in Greek writings. The following are some examples.

Love of money (Mt 6.24, Lk 16.13)

For he alone is in kinship with God who has scorned wealth (Sen *EM* 18.13).

Love your enemies (Mt 5.39–44, Lk 6.27–29)

Do you on the contrary challenge him with kindness. Animosity, if abandoned by one side, forthwith dies; it takes two to make a fight. But if anger shall be rife on both sides, if the conflict comes, he is the better man who first withdraws; the vanquished is the one who wins. If someone strikes you, step back; for by striking back you will give him both the opportunity and the excuse to repeat his blow; when you later wish to extricate yourself, it will be impossible (Sen *de ira* 2.34.5).

Do as you would be done by (Mt 7.12, Lk 6.31)

Furthermore, when we advise a man to regard his friends as highly as himself, to reflect that an enemy may become a friend, to stimulate love in the friend, and to check hatred in the enemy, we add: "This is just and honourable" (Sen *EM* 95.63).

You must, however, reflect thus what danger you run at the hands of man, in order that you may deduce what is the duty of man. Try, in your dealings with others, to harm not, in order that you be not harmed. You should rejoice with all in their joys and sympathize with them in their troubles, remembering what you should offer and what you should withhold (Sen *EM* 103.3).

Good and bad fruit (Mt 7.16–18, Lk 6.43–45)

Hence, good does not spring from evil, any more than figs grow from olive-trees. Things which grow correspond to their seed; and goods cannot depart from their class. As that which is honourable does not grow from that which is base, so neither does good grow from evil. For the honourable and the good are identical (Sen *EM* 87.25).

Holy Spirit (Mt 12.32, Lk 12.10)

God is near you, he is with you, he is within you. This is what I mean, Lucilius: a holy spirit indwells within us, one who marks our good and bad deeds, and is our guardian. As we treat this spirit, so are we treated by it. Indeed, no man can be good without the help of God (Sen *EM* 41.2).

Mustard seed (Mt 13.31–33, Lk 13.18–19)

Words should be scattered like seed; no matter how small the seed may be, if it has once found favourable ground, it unfolds its strength and from an insignificant thing spreads to its greatest growth. Reason grows in the same way; it is not large to the outward view, but increases as it does its work ...Yes, precepts and seeds have the same quality; they produce much, and yet they are slight things (Sen *EM* 38.2).

Sun shines (Mt 5.45)

“If you are imitating the gods”, you say, “then bestow benefits also upon the ungrateful; for the sun rises also upon the wicked, and the sea lies open also to pirates” (Sen *de beneficiis* 4.26.1).

Dove (Mk 1.10–11)

If you see a man who is unterrified in the midst of dangers, untouched by desires, happy in adversity, peaceful amid the storm, who looks down upon men from a higher plane, and views the gods on a footing of equality, will not a feeling of reverence for him steal over you? Will you not say: “This quality is too great and too lofty to be regarded as resembling this petty body in which it dwells? A divine power has descended upon that man” (Sen *EM* 41.4).

Treasure (Mt 6.20–21, Lk 12.33–34)

The soul, I affirm, knows that riches are stored elsewhere than in men’s heaped-up treasure-houses; that it is the soul, and not the strong-box, which should be filled. It is the soul that men may set in dominion over all things, and may install as owner of

the universe, so that it may limit its riches only by the boundaries of East and West, and like the gods, may possess all things; (Sen *EM* 92.32).

Wealth (Mk 10.23–25)

He who craves riches feels fear on their account. No man, however, enjoys a blessing that brings anxiety; he is always trying to add a little more. While he puzzles over increasing his wealth, he forgets how to use it (Sen *EM* 14.18).

Rich fool (Lk 12.16–20)

He who was venturing investments by land and sea, who had also entered public life and left no type of business untried, during the very realization of financial success and during the very onrush of the money that flowed into his coffers, was snatched from the world! “Graft now thy pears, Meliboeus, and set out thy vines in their order!” But how foolish it is to set out one’s life, when one is not even owner of the morrow! O what madness it is to plot out far-reaching hopes! To say: “I will buy and build, loan and call in money, win titles of honour, and then, old and full of years, I will surrender myself to a life of ease” (Sen *EM* 101.4).

The above list, however long, is given not to demonstrate that one writing is influenced by another, but to point out the thoughts of people in those days. Here for our current purpose, it helps to strengthen our evidence for the prevalence of Greek thought and Greek literature in the land of Israel. Based on the close thematic contacts of Gospel materials with Greek writings, we could possibly argue that either the evangelists or Jesus himself were aware of the Greek writings or at least themes and motifs found in them.

In an indirect way, this helps us to argue the prevalence of the story of Socrates in the land of Jesus. If Greek has so many parallels with the Gospels, there is great probability of the existence of a literary contact between Greek and Hebrew cultures.

D. Eleazar

Eleazar was one of the leading teachers of the law, martyred when he was ninety and a much respected man of authority. He was a priest by family, an expert in the Law and known to many because of his philosophy (4 Macc 5.4). He was one of the Jewish Martyrs who set an example to many, to die for a good cause.

We have a description of his martyrdom, the words and specifically the prayers before his death through the writings of 2 Maccabees, dated c.124 BCE and 4 Maccabees, dated c.50 CE. S.K.Williams extensively argues for 'a date antedating the period of Paul's literary activity by at least a decade' for 4 Maccabees (Williams 1975:197–202). Jeremias (about 35 CE), Lohse (a date in the first half of the first century), Obermann (around 35 CE), Seeley (during Paul's life time) and others support this dating. We are not entering into debate about the dating of these books.

The Jews were forced to abandon their ancestral and religious customs. The Temple was polluted, impure offerings were offered and licentiousness was allowed in the sacred precincts. It was forbidden either to observe the Sabbath or to keep the traditional festivals, or even to admit that someone was a Jew at all (2 Macc 6.6). Further, Jews were ordered to eat flesh which was impure (according to their Law) and those who refused were ordered to be killed. This was a way of Hellenization – Jews accepting the Greek ways of living. There were many who refused and a series of martyrdoms resulted. This took place under the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes about 167 BCE.

Eleazar was also compelled to eat pork and he preferred an honourable death to an unclean life. He “went up to the rack of his own accord” (2 Macc 6.19). Because of his age and his high standing, the officials responsible asked him at least to pretend to eat pork. Instead, Eleazar decided to be ‘worthy of the holy and God-given law’. He immediately replied

‘Such pretence is not worthy of our time of life’, he said, ‘for many of the young might suppose that Eleazar in his ninetieth year had gone over to an alien religion, and through my pretence, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they would be led astray because of me, while I defile and disgrace my old age. Even if for the present I would avoid the punishment of mortals, yet whether I live or die I will not escape the hands of the Almighty. Therefore, by bravely giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws (2 Macc 6.24–28).

When he was about to die under the blows, Eleazar sighed deeply and said:

It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul I am glad to suffer these things because I fear him (2 Macc 6.30).

When they saw that he was so courageous in the face of the afflictions, and that he had not been changed by their compassion, the guards brought him to the fire. There they burned him with maliciously contrived instruments, threw him down, and poured stinking liquids into his nostrils. When he was now burned to his very bones and about to expire, he lifted up his eyes to God and said, “You know, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I am dying in burning torments for the sake of the law. Be merciful to your people, and let our punishment suffice for them. Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs.” And after he said this, the holy man died nobly in his tortures, and by reason he resisted even to the very tortures of death for the sake of the law (4 Macc 6.24–30).

The accounts in the Maccabees are part of Hellenistic-Jewish writings. M. de Jonge holds the view that they are influenced by “Greek, Hellenistic and Roman ideas

about dying for one's city and for friends, for the law and for truth, and about expiatory sacrifice to assuage the anger of the gods" (De Jonge 1988:147).

D. Seeley deals with the strongly Hellenistic features of 2 and 4 Maccabees. After discussing Seneca, Epictetus, Silius Italicus, Plutarch and others, he comes to the conclusion that the noble death was at home in the Greco-Roman world by the first century CE. He has convincingly argued that

By imaginatively re-enacting the Noble Deaths of figures like Socrates or Cato, one gains freedom from the fear and compulsion of death or fate. Indeed, the extent to which these abstractions are personified puts the Noble Death of the philosopher-martyr closer to Jesus' death in Paul (with its use of aeon-categories like Sin) than were the deaths of the Maccabean martyrs. Socrates is said to have freed mankind from the fear of death, Scipio to have defeated death, and Cato to have frustrated the efforts of Fortune against him. It is also said of Cato that Nature brought her power against him to that everyone would know the catastrophes which followed were not real ills (Seeley 1990:149).

It is worth noting the relevant writings of Seneca and Plutarch at this point. They give a clear clue as to the presence of the Socrates story among the thinkers.

Seneca (c. 4 BCE–65 CE) writes about Socrates as follows.

Socrates in prison discoursed, and declined to flee when certain persons gave him the opportunity; he remained there, in order to free mankind from the fear of two most grievous things, death and imprisonment (*Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales* 24.4).

Seneca further writes that Fortune

Seeks out the bravest men to match with her; some she passes by in disdain. Those that are most stubborn and unbending she assails, men against whom she may exert all her strength. Mucius she tries by fire, Fabricius by poverty, Rutilius by exile, Regulus by torture, Socrates by poison, Cato by death. It is only evil fortune that discovers a great exemplar (*Moral Essays Prov.*3.4).

Plutarch writes that

We should face the future undaunted and confident and say to Fortune what Socrates, when he was supposed to be replying to his accusers, was really saying to the jury, "Anytus and Meletus are able to take away my life, but they cannot hurt me". Fortune, in fact, can encompass us with sickness, take away our possessions, slander us to people or despot; but she cannot make the good and valiant and high-souled man base or cowardly, mean, ignoble, or envious, nor can she deprive us of that disposition, the constant presence of which is of more help in facing life than is pilot in facing the sea (Plut *Mor*, *On Tranquility of Mind*, 475E).

If this is correct, we have one more support for our previous section which dealt with Socrates. We have an example of Greek literature influencing the Intertestamental Jewish literature and indirectly influencing Jesus' religious belief.

Discussing the presence of a noble death in Palestine, B.Mack argues that 4 Maccabees combines a Hellenized version of an old Jewish wisdom tale with the Greek tradition of noble death. Vindication of the martyr is the chief emphasis here. Further, he argues that it places "the faithful righteous ones in the hands of tyrants, emphasizing the importance of faithful obedience to the law, and affirming that, though killed, the righteous ones and their cause will prevail" (Mack 1988:106–107).

If 4 Maccabees is dated as early as 50 CE, its motif of vicarious death could have influenced Paul but we would have to date this work much earlier for this motif to have influenced the earliest stages of the Gospel tradition. The idea of dying for or on behalf of the law, religion or God is dominant in the case of Maccabean martyrs. Eleazar appeals to God to show mercy to people. De Jonge further argues that "the martyrs die in solidarity with Israel as the people of God, because of their own sins

and those of their people. The result of their death is that God is indeed reconciled with Israel and shows his mercy” (De Jonge 1988:148).

Even though the terminology between 2 Maccabees and 4 Maccabees is quite different, there is much similarity of thought. De Jonge was right in pointing out that the basic view of both writings is the same. He concedes that “the violent death of exemplary servants of God restores the right relationship between God and his people, and makes it possible for Israel to live in peace again” (:150).

Is there any resemblance with Jesus’ prayer? The prayer of Eleazar is in 4 Maccabees 6.27–29. Moreover, we have an oblique reference to his prayer in 2 Maccabees 6.30. One very important thing to note here is that this prayer is done in public whereas Jesus’ prayer is done in private.

You know, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I am dying in burning torments for the sake of the law. Be merciful to your people, and let our punishment suffice for them. Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs.

In Eleazar’s prayer, we can trace the following elements.

1. Invoking God.
2. Acknowledging God’s omniscience about Eleazar’s power and his purpose.
3. Making his prayer for the sake of others.

However, any doubt on the part of Eleazar is missing due to the seeming certainty about God’s will.

W.J.Heard concedes that an amalgamation of nationalism and religion could be traced among the Maccabean martyrs (Heard 1986:293). The expiatory effect of the suffering is evident in Eleazar's prayer as it is written in 4 Macc 6.28 and 29. "Be merciful to your people, and let our punishment suffice for them. Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs".

Frend notes some important aspects of the Maccabean martyrs (Frend 1965:45ff).

1. No deviations from the prescription of the Torah were permissible, particularly if these could be interpreted as giving even a tacit assent to idolatry (2 Macc 6.29,39).
2. The martyr was regarded as representative of the people of Israel and 'an example of nobility and a memorial of virtue, not only to the young but also to the great body of his nation' (2 Macc 6.12–18,24–28,31, 7.32,37,38).
3. The martyr was the agent for the preparation of the age to come. Reconciliation between God and His people through the 'hastening of God's mercy' would be speeded by his sacrifice (3 Macc 6.8, 6.18).
4. The sacrifice was willing and unresisting (2 Macc 7.3, 6.29, 1 Macc 2.37, Dan 3.17–18).

Frend maintains that martyrdom wipes off a fixed amount of transgression and reconciliation is achieved when the cup had been emptied sufficiently. In this context, it is worth noting what happened at Masada in 73 CE.

Even though it happened in 73 AD, it is a great marker to get into the mind-set of the first century. The Zealot Fortress of Masada could be called a Jewish national shrine. The excavations of Yigael Yadin have given new enthusiasm to the study of Masada. In terms of literature, Josephus is the only authentic person to have written accounts

about the tragic events of Masada. Josephus, a Jew, writes the Roman history about the zealous Jews who preferred to kill themselves rather than surrender to the Romans. They could not see themselves slaves of somebody other than God Himself.

Nine hundred and sixty Jews—men, women and children—committed an organised mass suicide on 15 April 73 CE. The key role for the incident is attributed to the leader of the team, Eleazar Ben Yair. He delivered two addresses just before all could be convinced of this adventurous act (Jos *BJ* 7.320–388). The whole matter was explained to the Roman soldiers only by two women, who managed to hide and save themselves. Many scholars unanimously agree that the first address of about one page and the second address of about four pages are fabrications of Josephus. However the historical validity of the incident is not challenged as such.

The addresses of Eleazar Ben Yair have to be taken seriously for several reasons. This is a first century account about a mass suicide. The underlying reason for the suicide is national and religious. Therefore, it is possible to understand the belief system of that time. The scrolls found during excavation could not be outrightly disconnected from the act of mass suicide itself.

After the first address, not many were persuaded to perform the act. Therefore, Eleazar Ben Yair asks why they are hesitant to commit suicide. He gives many reasons why suicide is the most reasonable thing to do.

1. It is a proof of the determination to serve only God.

2. It is God who has given the privilege, that they die nobly and as free people.
3. Death or slavery is definite if 'noble death' is not preferred. God himself has taken away the hope of survival.
4. It is the penalty to God (not to the Romans) for those wrongs they did to fellow citizens.
5. Death gives freedom to the souls and lets them depart to their own pure home where they will know nothing of any calamity.
6. These things happen because of a mightier hand that has intervened (not because of the Romans).
7. We are born to die.
8. This is what the Law ordains.

Eleazar Ben Yair's speech shows some of the commonly held beliefs and opinions about death and dying for a specific purpose. It is true that Josephus delivers a speech at Jotapata to his fellow citizens against suicide (Jos *BJ* 3.361–382). In that instance, he calls suicide absurd, cowardly, contrary to the instincts, impiety towards the God who made us, hateful in God's sight and so on. We are sure that this is the same person writing now for suicide through the mouth of Eleazar Ben Yair. However, this serves as an important tool to understand a first century mind.

Cohen argues that Masada is not unique. He supports his argument with sixteen other examples from Ancient history. He finds out that collective suicide was the

action of last resort not only for “barbarians” (Taochians, Sidonians, Spaniards, Gauls, Illyrians) but also for Greeks, Romans and the people of Asia Minor, whose object was to avoid capture not only by Romans but also by Persians, Greeks (including Macedonians and Thessalonians) and Carthaginians (Cohen 1982:390).

It is also important to note his observations that ancient historians often exaggerated and embellished the truth when narrating collective suicides, that collective suicide has become a stock motif for some historians and those ancient historians generally approved of collective suicide. However, he concludes that Josephus attempted to be reasonably accurate in matters that were verifiable by Silva and the Romans and that he refrained from inventing glorious military actions for the Sicarii.

Jacobs draws attention to the fact that Eleazar Ben Yair ultimately invokes the sanction of the “laws” while exhorting his comrades to accept a noble death (Jacobs 1982:183). He suggests that Eleazar Ben Yair was referring to Deut 6.5 that has been interpreted by early Tannaim as the scriptural sanction for martyrdom. He quotes Akiba b. Joseph (two generations after the fall of Masada) who inspired many of his contemporaries to accept a martyr’s fate rather than compromise their allegiance to the precepts of the Torah, with his interpretation of Dt 6.5, “ ‘And thou shalt love the Lord thy God...with all thy soul’—even though He takes away thy soul!” (:183).

When Quirinius, the Roman Senator started to make an assessment of the Jewish property, Judas, a Gaulanite from Gamala started to rebel. For him, “the assessment carried with it a status amounting to downright slavery, no less, and appealed to the

nation to make a bid for independence” (Jos *Ant* 18.4). Josephus reports further about this group in 18.5

They urged that in case of success the Jews would have laid the foundation of prosperity, while if they failed to obtain any such boon, they would win honour and renown for their lofty aim; and that Heaven would be their zealous helper to no lesser end than the furthering of their enterprise until it succeeded – all the more if with high devotion in their hearts they stood firm and did not shrink from the bloodshed that might be necessary.

In addition, while talking about the fourth of the philosophies, Josephus writes that

This school agrees in all other respects with the opinions of the Pharisees, except that they have a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master. They think little of submitting to death in unusual forms and permitting vengeance to fall on kinsmen and friends if only they may avoid calling any man master. Inasmuch as most people have seen the steadfastness of their resolution amid such circumstances, I may forego any further account. For I have no fear that anything reported of them will be considered incredible. The danger is, rather, that report may minimize the indifference with which they accept the grinding misery of pain. (*Ant*, 18.23–24)

In the case of Eleazar, he tells Antiochus that “there is no compulsion more powerful than our obedience to the Law” (4 Macc 5.16). Further he says that the Law “teaches us self-control, so that we master all pleasures and desires, and it also trains us in courage, so that we endure any suffering willingly” (5.23). Obedience to the Law dominates the whole scene and the whole process is done willingly. There is no explicit reference to the will of God. However, it is to be noted that the Law was considered to be the revelation of the will of God.

As he prays just before his death in 4 Macc 6.27, he uses the following words. “You know, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I am dying in burning torments for the sake of the law...”. Here the distinction between what Eleazar might have

done with the power and ability he had and what he chose to do willingly *for the sake of the law* is very clear. One powerful factor which possibly influenced and directed his act was the emphasis he put on the Law.

We have to note 3 Macc 6.10–15 where Eleazar’s prayer reflects his desire to escape. He talks about the three companions in Babylon and Jonah who were delivered by God’s mighty acts in his prayer. In his prayer, he talks much about God’s people being rescued. “Rescue us from the hand of the enemy” (6.10), “Watch over us now and have mercy on us” (6.11), “Let it be shown to all the Gentiles that you are with us” (6.15) and “Just as you have said, ...so accomplish it, O Lord” (6.15) are only few examples from the version of 3 Maccabees.

However, if we ask a question whether Eleazar was granted any opportunity to escape his death, we have to say that it was as bad as any other forced death. If he does not stand for any principle, if he just accepts whatever the authorities say, he can escape. However, in reality, taking into consideration the standpoint of Eleazar, there was no possibility of an escape. At the same time, if we ask a question, ‘Did he think about escaping?’, an emphatic ‘no’ would be the answer. He was clear in his mind what he was doing according to the record we have. There was no place for confusion or uncertainty.

That is a subtle difference between Jesus’ prayer and Eleazar’s prayer at this point. Eleazar was very clear about what the Law demanded of him. At least he seemed to know very clearly. That is why he was able to challenge others and to convince

himself to face the courageous act of death. In the case of Jesus' prayer, Jesus was not sure of what the will of God demanded of him. That is why, Jesus seemed to leave everything open before taking any decision. The surprising thing in his case is that he seemed to carry on this doubt right up to the cross in the cry of dereliction.

E. Polycarp of Smyrna

Our last example in this section is Polycarp. As we noted earlier, even though he was a Christian, it is good to notice how a Christian in the second century thought and reflected about his death and how he prayed before his death. This might give us an insight into the thought pattern of religiously devoted people and their approach towards death in the broad time scale with which we are concerned. In addition, towards the end of this section, we will look into the interpretations of some of the Church Fathers who elucidated the Gethsemane prayer in different ways.

Saint Polycarp of Smyrna is from second century Christianity and he underwent the death of a martyr. One writing about his martyrdom that has been the pride for the study of the ancient Christian martyrs is the letter of the Church at Smyrna to the Church in Philomelium, which is commonly known as the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (MPol). In fact, this letter is addressed to “all the sojournings of the Holy Catholic Church in every place”. Considering the text itself, this is taken by some to be an eyewitness report (15.1) and a report written within a year of the event it describes (18.3) (Michaels 1979:210).

MPol is known in six Greek MSS, in extensive quotations by Eusebius (*HE* 4.15) and a Latin version. The Moscow MS is considered the most reliable one.

The date of the Martyrdom of Polycarp is a highly disputed one. The date mentioned in MPol 21 is not accepted by many scholars as the date of MPol. Schoedel suggests

that chapter 21 is a later addition and it need not be taken seriously to date the incident. In addition there has been an on-going controversy based on the threefold doxology. J.A.Robinson expresses his surprise on the form of the doxology “through whom to Thee with Him and the Holy Spirit”, which is attributed to an approximate date of 156 CE (J.A.Robinson 1923:144). At the same time Tyrer is of the opinion that this threefold doxology was already established by 155 CE (Tyrer 1922:390).

With reference to the historicity of Polycarp’s martyrdom, Barnard enlists the following four evidences. They are the references about the martyrdom of Polycarp in Iren *Haer* 3.3.4, Polycrates, the letter of the Gallican Churches and the Acts of Pionius (Barnard 1970:192). Therefore, the martyrdom is considered historical.

Schoedel argues that MPol “shares with post biblical Judaism and early Christianity an emphasis on the importance of affirming a way of life in obedience to the will of God and of being committed to it, if need be, to the point of death”. Further, he points out that it “shares with Judaism and early Christianity the confidence that God will reward those who endure to the end with a ‘crown of incorruption’” (Schoedel 1992:393). Schoedel identifies “an imitation of Christ that implies an emphasis on the martyr’s special sanctity” in MPol. Moreover, the text at 17.2 mentions opponents fearing that Polycarp might become the object of worship. The distinction between the ‘worship’ due to Christ and the ‘love’ due to martyrs (17.3) are also to be noted in MPol.

Some scholars suggest that MPol deals with Montanism and others tend to see this as a response to Gnosticism. Schoedel argues that “MPol is confronting difficulties that could arise in any Christian Community from inordinate caution or excessive zeal in meeting hostile challenges from the social environment of the churches” (Schoedel 1992:394). Further he suggests that ‘MPol was taking into account an incipient tendency within the churches to honour the martyr too highly’. The echoes of the Jewish ideas of martyrdom are frequent (Baumeister 1980:295–99; Nautin 1992:701). Growing enthusiasm for miracles and the transformation of the martyr into a saint are some of the other motifs found in MPol. Nautin believes that MPol has influenced the development of the literary genre of the accounts of martyrdom (Nautin 1992:701).

Dehandschutter argues that MPol has to be taken in its context. This letter is an opportunity to teach people of Philomelium about martyrdom. Martyrdom is according to God and not according to man. He also emphasises that the author rejects the individualistic view about martyrdom. This is an attempt to denote to what extent a man can influence his fate in choosing martyrdom (Dehandschutter 1982:662–666).

Shepherd argues that “Christian martyrdom was ... nothing less than a mystic communion and conformation with One who died for our sins that he might raise us eternally unto a life of holiness and everlasting joy” (Shepherd 1953:141). While discussing the idea of the martyr, Kallistos in a popular article writes that “the martyr *offers* himself, thereby changing his death into a sacrifice”. He also emphasises the

solidarity with Christ, an idea of universal vocation and joy-creating sorrow of a martyr (Kallistos 1983:8–18). Allchin notes that “all martyrdom is a participation in Christ’s one great act of martyrdom, the mystery of his death and resurrection” (Allchin 1984:28).

Polycarp’s Prayer:

Chapter 14 of MPol draws our attention very much to the prayer he uttered just before his martyrdom. Some are sceptical about the words of the prayer. Ferguson allows the possibility that some of the faithful may have overheard this prayer (Ferguson 1987:142). It is very true that there are overtones of the Eucharistic prayer or other liturgical prayers in this chapter. At the same time it is undeniable that Polycarp might have used his favourite prayers just before his death which in turn might have been already the Eucharistic prayers.

It is worth quoting his prayer here.

O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Child, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have received full knowledge of thee, the God of Angels and powers, and of all creation, and of the whole family of the righteous, who live before thee.

I bless thee, that Thou hast granted me this day and hour, that I may share (τοῦ λαβεῖν με), among the number of the martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ (ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ), for the Resurrection to everlasting life, both of soul and body in the immortality of the Holy Spirit. And may I, today, be received among them before Thee, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice (θυσία), as Thou, the God who lies not and is truth, hast prepared beforehand, and shown forth, and fulfilled.

For this reason I also praise Thee for all things, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through the everlasting and heavenly high Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved

Child, through whom be glory to Thee with him and the Holy Spirit, both now and for the ages that are to come, Amen. [Tr.K.Lake]

There have been attempts to interpret the martyrdom of Polycarp as an eucharistic event. However, this has not been true to the text and the background. Polycarp's prayer to be accepted as a sacrifice by God and his prayer of thanksgiving for the privilege to share in the cup of Christ clearly give the impression that Polycarp understood his death in sacrificial terms.

Schoedel very clearly states that the reference of 'cup' in this prayer is to the 'cup of martyrdom' (Schoedel 1967:70). Feldmeier feels that the martyrdom of Polycarp can be spoken of as the cup of Christ (Feldmeier 1987:181).

The last reactions of Polycarp are recorded in MPol 7.3

To this they assented, and he stood and prayed—thus filled with the grace of God—so that for two hours he could not be silent, and those who listened were astounded, and many repented that they had come against such a venerable old man.

In MPol 2.3, we read that the martyrs are "no longer men but already angels". This gives an idea what they believed about life after death. In 9.1, Polycarp was strengthened by a voice from heaven "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man".

T.Baumeister in his *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums* (1980) emphasises the role of the apocalyptic vision of Daniel in the theology of martyrdom. His study is traditio-historically based. Dehandschutter summarises Baumeister's standpoint in the following words.

Historical facts make people look for a turning point caused by God in favour of the just oppressed. In intertestamental literature this turning point becomes the central point of description. At the same time persecution is interpreted positively as a possibility for purification, test or punishment. Hellenistic influence is manifest when the idea of resurrection (2 Macc) is modified to that of the eternal life of the martyr (4 Macc). In early Christianity the experience of persecution also receives theological interpretation. In Jesus' expectation the disciples should remain faithful unto death. The theme of the "death of the prophet" is adapted. Elsewhere the 'apocalyptic' view is continued in combination with *parousia*-expectation (Revelation). Nevertheless the center of the Christian view is Jesus and his '*Nachfolge*'; discipleship involves rejection and persecution. In the post-Pauline communities, suffering for the faith is seen as a divine gift. MPol is the culminating point of all this: 'martyrium' is made an 'independent' theological theme. Hardly anything is lacking from the tradition: Daniel 3, 2 and 4 Maccabees, Martyrium Isaiae, Stephen, 1 Peter, Revelation, 1 Clement, Ignatius, surrounded by a Johannine 'colouring' (Dehandschutter 1993:513).

Dehandschutter gives a correction to Baumeister's traditio-historical approach in his emphasis on the function of the text. He concedes that the imitation-theme which is not just identification with Christ as in the case of Ignatius, is very important to understand the theology of martyrdom. According to Dehandschutter, the martyrdom has to be understood as 'an expression of the will of God' in the light of the formulae 'as the Lord' and 'according to the Gospel'. He further comments that "the tendency of MPol is precisely to make a distinction between the martyr and Christ (ch.17) and to indicate the correct attitude in persecution, not in a normative way but as a concrete answer to the gnostic challenge" (:514).

B.Dehandschutter in his recent excellent study "The Martyrium Polycarpi: a Century of Research" summarises the theological arguments of the century in his final section (Dehandschutter 1993:485–522). While there is a close resemblance between the martyrdom of the Maccabees and the martyrdom of Polycarp, there are some

special features in the case of the martyrdom of Polycarp. The unearthly character of the martyr is visible in MPol. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the imitation theme is found in MPol together with the witness theme of the Prophets or the Jewish martyrs. It has been held by some scholars that the death of a witness makes him or her a martyr.

According to Von Campenhausen, the MPol lost the early Christian meaning of witness as we compare it with the New Testament (Campenhausen 1963:253–301). According to H.W.Surkau, the theme of imitation is present in MPol not as a norm but as a teaching to other Christians (Surkau 1938:134). MPol is understood as an illustration for a christianising attitude of the atonement in Lohse's *Märtyrer und Gottesknecht* (1955). Kretschmar understands MPol in connection with the Passover, suffering righteous and the offering of Isaac (Kretschmar 1972:287–323).

Here, we have an example from the second century of a martyr understanding his death in terms of sacrifice. It could be argued that it is a cup of eucharistic sacrifice. If the Eucharist is understood as a sacrifice that is participating in the death of Christ, the sacrificial meaning continues. Polycarp participated in the death of Christ.

MPol in relation to Col 1.24:

There is another question. Did Polycarp understand that sacrifice is completely performed by Jesus Christ for the sins of the world? Or did he feel that sacrifice has to continue in the lives of the martyrs and in every disciple of Christ? In this

connection, we will look briefly at Colossians 1.24 where Paul allegedly thinks of the same concept.

It is now my happiness to suffer for you. This is my way of helping to complete, in my poor human flesh, the full tale of Christ's afflictions (τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ) still to be endured, for the sake of his body which is the church.

As it is an explicitly disturbing verse, so much effort has been made to preserve the uniqueness of Christ's sufferings and not to bring in any way Paul's sufferings near it. What is still to be endured? Or what is lacking in Christ's afflictions?

Bauckham points out that θλίψις has never been used to denote anywhere else the redemptive sufferings of Christ. It is worth enlisting some of the interpretations for this verse (Bauckham 1975:168–170). By virtue of Paul's apostolic ministry, Paul enables the new age to come to birth. Paul is playing his part to make up for what is deficient to hasten the day of glory. This apocalyptic perspective has been supported by Bauckham and others.

Perriman concedes that the deficiency mentioned in the verse is not Christ's but of Paul himself (Perriman 1991:62–79). Yates feels that the deficiency mentioned in the verse is the deficiency of the Church, the corporate body of Christians (Yates 1970:88–91, also Trudinger 1973:36–38). Lohse holds the view that the apostle performs a vicarious service completing what is lacking in Christ's affliction (Lohse 1971:70).

Pokorny in the footnote of his commentary argues that “in early Christians’ thought the suffering of Christ had its precursors (OT Prophecy) and effects (the suffering of the apostles and martyrs)”. In this way, he continues, the author of Colossians draws “a parallel between his work and the work of Christ” and appeals “to some christological predicates, especially the substitutionary suffering” (Is 52.13–53.12 cf. Mk 10.45) (Pokorny 1991:100). Therefore, there is a place to think that the apostle thought of his death as something sacrificial that had to be fulfilled. This goes in line with our question on Polycarp’s thinking about his own death in sacrificial terms.

Polycarp and Ignatius:

Quite often, MPol is taken together with the Ignatian understanding of martyrdom. Ignatius saw martyrdom as an opportunity to walk in his master’s path. For example, in his letter to the Romans 6.3 we read of him saying “Suffer me to follow the example of the Passion of my God”. Further in Ign Rm 4.2 he says “Rather entice the wild beasts that they may become my tomb, and leave no trace of my body, that when I fall asleep I be not burdensome to any. Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ”. Obedience unto death could be the conclusive proof for one’s discipleship. According to Ignatius’ understanding, discipleship is an ongoing process. It has to be carried through to the end. True discipleship could be fulfilled only after death.

R.Williams writes “Ignatius himself evidently thought of his death as a sacrifice, even a sacrifice on behalf of the churches” (Williams 1982:19). In Ign Rm 2.2 we

read “Grant me nothing more than that I be poured out to God, while an altar is still ready...”. A notion of vicarious sacrifice is found in the word ἀντιψυχον (Lightfoot 1889:87). Michaels notes that his death is a sacrifice, sometimes specifically as a eucharistic sacrifice (Michaels 1979:208). He further argues that “for Ignatius, violent death means participation in the sacrifice of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. To be martyred is to receive the sacrament of the eucharist in the ultimate sense”.

While the church was his central place of activity and an organ that he defended, Ignatius viewed his martyrdom as a threat to the existing social systems. His disobedience to the rulers of this world was a threat for them and it signified the end of the contemporary power systems and looked for an unseen rule symbolised by the Church and the bishop and headed by Christ.

Parallels with the Passion of Christ:

A number of parallels have been identified between the martyrdom of Polycarp and the Passion story of Jesus Christ. Prophecy about his own death, the pursuers seeking him as seeking a robber, Polycarp's words like “God's will be done”, the voice from heaven, the crowd standing against Polycarp, etc. are some of them. Barnard gives a long list of eighteen aspects of comparison (Barnard 1970:194f). Schoedel maintains that foreknowledge of one's own death is a common theme in the Christian martyr's death (Schoedel 1967:59). Further, Dehandschutter suggests that the parallels are only superficial and this is due to the effort to interpret falsely the

idea 'according to the Gospel' (Dehandschutter 1982:661). Therefore, Schoedel feels that "it may be correct to say that MPol does not intend so much to imitate the passion as to show that Polycarp's behaviour was in harmony with the will of God and in conformity with the gospel" (Schoedel 1992:394).

There are a few more similarities between the martyrdom of Polycarp and the death of Jesus. The bravery of Jesus while women were lamenting for him (Lk 23.27–31), gives a picture that Jesus was braver than the onlookers. Polycarp was very brave throughout his martyrdom. Polycarp prays that God may grant him "to remain in the flames unmoved" (13.3). R.E.Brown notices "No canonical Gospel mentions Jesus' suffering. However, as it reports that they 'crucified the Lord', GPet 4.10 comments, 'But he was silent as having no pain'" (Brown 1994:951).

In MPol 11.2, Polycarp said: "You threaten with the fire that burns for a time, and is quickly quenched, for you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgement to come and in everlasting punishment". These tones of the death bringing divine intervention and the time to come being worse are to be found also in the Gospels.

The startling contrast noticed by Brown (1994:772) between Jesus' behaviour of keeping silence and the defence speeches of the martyrs can not be missed (cf. 2 Macc 6.23–28, 7.2,9,11, 4 Macc 5.14–38, 9.1–9, 11.1–9 MPol 10–12). Brown argues that silence is a major departure from the usual pattern of the Jewish and Christian martyrs. Some pray for vindication and others pronounce judgement on

opponents. The prayer of forgiveness is not so common among the martyrs. The instance of Stephen is an exception where he knelt down before he died and cried out saying "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Ac 7.60).

Did Polycarp get a chance to escape? MPol 7.1 talks about an opportunity Polycarp had to depart to another place. But it is recorded that he refused to seek that option.

Taking the slave then police and cavalry went out on Friday about supper-time, with their usual arms, as if they were advancing against a robber. And late in the evening they came up together against him and found him lying in an upper room. And he might have departed to another place, but would not, saying, "*the will of God* be done".

The similarity between Eleazar's prayer and Polycarp's prayer is significant. Polycarp was given the possibility to escape. But he decided not to escape and to allow the will of God to be done. We see his underlying clarity about the will of God.

If we look a little more closely and try to find the reason for this startling difference, we can trace one thing. Eleazar found his whole comfort in the Law and put his trust in the Law and died for the Law. Polycarp found the reason for his whole life in Christ and put his trust in Christ and died for Christ. If we try to expand the reason for Jesus himself, there is a significant difference. Jesus neither died for the Law nor for some other religious figure whom he worshipped. The fact that he took each moment as it came and faced it then and there cannot be denied. Probably this put him in a unique place that he faced his life and his death as they came without any ulterior motives.

R.E.Brown (Brown 1994:188) concedes “this martyrological background offers insight as to how Luke’s readers may have understood the presence of the strengthening angel in Jesus’ passion, that is, as God’s loving response to his servant who was suffering from unjust persecution”.

In MPol 9. 2–3, we hear about the persuasion by the Proconsul to deny Christ. Observing similar motives in 4 Macc 8.7, 10.15, Rv 2.13, 1 Tm 6.13, 2 Tm 2.13, Pliny (*Ep* 10.96–97) and Justin (*Apol* 1.31.6), Brown concludes that the early Christians would have understood Peter’s testing in the light of their own (Brown 1994:625f). Further, Brown notices the hostile crowd during the trial (MPol 12.2) and observes “As for whether historically such an outcry of crowds occurred during the trial of Jesus by Pilate, we can speak only of verisimilitude” (Brown 1994:721).

To summarise our discussion on Polycarp, suffering for the faith was considered divine gift in the early Christian community. Ignatius considered martyrdom as an opportunity to walk in his master’s path. Polycarp considered that he was participating in the death of Christ. Col 1.24 also gives an impression that apostle Paul thought of his suffering to fulfil what was lacking in Christ’s afflictions. We have also noted that the sacrificial overtones are dominant in Polycarp’s prayer. While there was opportunity to escape, Polycarp refused to take that possibility saying that it was God’s will. We have also noticed that a prayer for vindication or a pronouncement of judgement on opponents is more common than a prayer of forgiveness in such contexts of martyrdom.

Even though this story comes from the second century, here we see a clear picture of a religious person facing his death with fervour and courage taking lead from another person who died before him. He claims that he participates in the death of his model. There are significant parallels between the Passion Narrative and the martyrdom of Polycarp. We have a proof here for a background which accepts dying in the name of someone else as normal and meritorious. We do not claim that this was the same in the time of Jesus also. Rather, this situation emerged out of the time of Jesus and therefore gives us a clue retrospectively for a probable ethos of Jesus' background.

Patristic Interpretations of the Prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane

The early Church Fathers have interpreted the Gethsemane prayer in different ways. A brief survey of their interpretations on the Gethsemane narrative explains the many issues they addressed with the help of this particular pericope. Jesus' knowledge about his suffering, Jesus' example for the sake of Christians, Jesus' fear and trembling just before death and Jesus' human nature are some of the important issues for them as they explained Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane. We see them either in the context of their defence of the Christian faith or their teaching to their followers.

It is apt to say with Madigan that, "Although Jesus' agony in the garden ... may be powerful and even inexpressibly poignant to modern readers, it was a plague and embarrassment to the patristic and medieval interpreter" (Madigan 1995:157). Interpretation is a significant marker to assess the thought pattern of the time.

1. Ignorance of Jesus about his Suffering:

Could Jesus have been ignorant of his suffering and its impact or effect? The church Fathers have been tackling this question for a long time. Justin Martyr was confident that Jesus prayed ‘not my will but yours be done’ to prevent anybody saying “He knew not that He was about to suffer” (Just *Dial* 99). He takes the Psalms as referring to Christ. The cry of Jesus does not disturb him much. Instead he was so particular to mention that Jesus knew of everything which was happening to him. Therefore he writes that Jesus

signifies that it was not through His own want of understanding, but that of those who thought that He was not the Christ, but considered that they should put Him to death, and that He would remain in Hades as a common man (Just *Dial* 99).

In the same line of interpretation, Justin writes that

this passage, *My bones are poured out as water, and parted; my heart is like melting wax in the midst of my belly*, is a prophecy of what was done to Him on that night when they came out against Him at the Mount of Olives to take Him; ... His heart and likewise His bones trembling, and the former resembling wax melting in His belly, that we may know that the Father willed His own Son truly to undergo even these sufferings for our sakes, and that we may not say that being the Son of God, He did not feel those things which were laid upon Him, and which happened to Him (Just *Dial* 103).

Origen was unhappy that Celsus quotes the words of Jesus “O Father, take this cup away from me” but does not add what follows. Origen claims that “according to your will” exhibits the firmness of Jesus and His preparedness for suffering (Or *Cels* 2.24).

John Chrysostom in his homily writes that Jesus' expression "not according to my will but according to your will" shows Jesus' virtue and self-command (Chrys *Hom Mt* 83). Equating the God of the Hebrew Scriptures with Jesus, Cyril of Alexandria raises some questions to the Lord:

For what reason, O Lord? Wast Thou also terrified at death? Didst Thou being seized with fear draw back from suffering? And yet didst not Thou teach the holy apostles to make no account of the terrors of death, saying, "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Cyr *Comm Lk* Sermon 146).

For Cyril, the fact that Jesus knew all that he was undergoing was very important. There has been a strong feeling of uneasiness to admit that Jesus went through a period of uncertainty. This issue is closely connected with other issues like the divinity of Jesus.

2. Fear of Jesus about his suffering:

To say that "Jesus was afraid" was occasionally equivalent to denying Christian faith. According to Cyril of Alexandria, the one who taught the apostles "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" could not have been possibly afraid of his own death (Cyr *Comm Lk* Sermon 146).

Athanasius writes in his discourses against the Arians that it is *unseemly* and *irreligious* to say that Jesus was afraid of death. In his words,

Yea, it is written that He wept, O God's enemies, and that He said 'I am troubled', and on the Cross He said, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani', that is, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' and He besought that the cup might pass away ... If the speaker is mere man, let him weep and fear death, as being man; but if He is the Word in flesh (for one must not be

reluctant to repeat), whom had He to fear being God? or wherefore should He fear death, who was Himself Life, and was rescuing others from death ... did He who Himself was come against death, feel terror of death? Is it not both unseemly and irreligious to say that he was terrified at death or hades, whom the keepers of the gates of hades saw and shuddered?... (Athan *OrCar* IV 3.54).

For Athanasius, Jesus was not merely a man and therefore he has no need to fear.

Jesus was God and therefore he cannot fear death. Pettersen argues that

Certainly, although Athanasius does seem to admit an experience of fear by the incarnate Logos, this admission may appear to modern ears to lack a certain poignancy. In treating this experience of fear Athanasius does not seem to distinguish Christ's psychological passions from his physical, but refers both to the assumed flesh; he does not invoke a human soul of Christ to explain Christ's psychological passions, but is content to refer them to the assumed humanity; and he does not seem to make any mention of the inner turmoil which is generally associated with fear (Pettersen 1986:335).

3. Grief and Sorrow of Jesus at Gethsemane:

Justin Martyr writes that Jesus prayed 'not my will, but yours' to show that "He has been verily made a man, capable of suffering" (Just *Dial* 99). Ambrose affirms that Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is said not as God but as man. He claims that Christ has "taken upon Him the substance of man, and therewith its affections" (Ambr *On the Christian Faith* 2.5.42). He feels that Christ had special power to will what the Father wills (:2.5.45).

Cyprian understands that the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane manifests the weakness of human nature (Cypr *DomOr* 14). Tertullian writes that

He likewise acknowledged, it is true, that His "soul was troubled, even unto death", and the flesh weak; with the design, [however,] first of all, that by having as His own trouble of soul and weakness of the flesh, He might show you that both the substances in Him were truly human, lest, as certain persons

have now brought it in, you might be led to think either the flesh or the soul of Christ different from ours; (Tert *De Fuga in Persecutione* vol 1, p 367).

In another place, he writes that as evidence of Christ's perfectly natural flesh, his trembling is used (Tert *CarChr* 9). According to *Homily* 83 of John Chrysostom, Jesus showed his humanity through his prayer at Gethsemane (Chrys *Hom Mt* 83).

Cyril tries to explain the reason for Jesus' anguish and grief at Gethsemane.

For what reason therefore art Thou grieved and sore distressed? Yes, He says, not unbefittingly am I found thus in anguish. For I know indeed that by consenting to suffer the passion upon the cross, I shall deliver all beneath the heaven from every evil, and be the cause of unending blessings to the inhabitants of the whole earth. I am not unaware of the unloosing of death, and the abolition of corporeal corruption, and the overthrow of the tyranny of the devil, and the remission of sin. But withal it grieveth Me for Israel the firstborn, that henceforth He is not even among the servants, The portion of the Lord, and the cord of My inheritance, will be "the portion of foxes", as it is written. He Who was the beloved one is greatly hated: he who had the promises is utterly stripped of My gifts: the pleasant vineyard with its rich grapes henceforth will be a desert land, a place dried up, and without water. "For I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it". "I will break through its hedge, and it shall be a spoil: and I will beat down its wall, and it shall be trampled under foot". And tell me then, what husbandman, when his vineyard is desert and waste, will feel no anguish for it? What shepherd would be so harsh and stern as, when his flock was perishing, to suffer nothing on its account? These are the causes of My grief: for these things I am sorrowful. For I am God, gentle, and that loveth to spare. "I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his evil way and live". Right therefore is it, most right, that as being good and merciful, I should not only be glad at what is joyful, but also should feel sorrow at whatsoever is grievous (Cyr *Comm Lk* Sermon 146).

4. Jesus' words as example for the Christians:

According to Augustine, Christ "transferred or transposed" the situation of the martyrs to himself when he said 'My soul is sorrowful unto death' (Aug *Serm* 31.3). Basil doubts whether Jesus really said that prayer (Bas *Eun* Book 4 on Mt 26.39). He

feels that it should not be understood that he said this prayer of himself. Rather, “it must be understood of those who were on the point of sinning against Him, to prevent them from sinning; when crucified on their behalf He said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ We must not understand words spoken in accordance with the oeconomy⁴ to be spoken simply.” For Cyprian, the Prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane is to give an example to his disciples (Cyp *DomOr* 14).

Tertullian writes that Jesus wanted to demonstrate to us the infirmity of flesh and that is why he said such a prayer in Gethsemane (Tert *On Prayer* 4). John Chrysostom in his homily on Matthew says that Jesus’ prayer at Gethsemane was to instruct the Christians to bear all manfully (Chrys *Hom Mt* 31.4).

The Christological problems of the Gethsemane narrative are difficult ones. Jesus’ questions “If it is possible...” and “If you desire...” leave some questions about God’s omniscient and omnipotent natures. It also raises the question about Jesus’ relationship with God whom he calls ‘my Father’. Augustine’s statement about the will of Jesus is a clear instance to go into the patristic interpretation. He asserts that Jesus “wished for something other than what the father willed” (Augustine, *Contra Maximinum*, 2.20).

⁴ B Jackson writes “According to patristic usage the word ‘theology’ is concerned with all that relates to the divine and eternal nature of Christ, as distinguished from the οἰκονομία, which relates to the incarnation, and consequent redemption of mankind” (Jackson B, Tr with notes 1895. *The Nine Homilies of the Hexaemeron and the Letters of Saint Basil the Great*, ed by H Wace & P Schaff, Vol 8, Oxford: James Parker and Co.) (A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series).

On the whole, it has been a great struggle to accept Jesus' ignorance, fear and grief about his suffering. Without negating the Biblical descriptions, how to understand the blatant assertions of the Evangelists about Jesus' uncertainty, fear and grief? How to accept that Jesus is the all knowing God and uncertain, fearful, grief-stricken man at the same time? These seem to be the questions the fathers address. Even though the emphases of the questions we face today are different, we gain insights from the above description of Fathers' discussion and defence.

Many of the Patristic comments seem to reflect the continuing Christological debate. On the one hand there is a desire to emphasise that distress is inappropriate to a divine nature, while on the other hand there exists a willingness to attribute the distress endorsed in the texts to his humanity. Most of the comments seem to reflect this outlook in one way or another.

F. Conclusion

We have tried to look at the words and attitudes of people just before their death. We have restricted our search only to those who underwent a forced death. They were accepted by some happily and by others reluctantly. Some had a clear sense of what they were doing and others were doubtful about their fate.

After a brief survey in general, we looked at the words of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Job. However, our main concentration has been on Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp. In contrast to the examples of Job or Jeremiah, our selected examples have shown some clear form of acceptance. They had a sense of completion in their action. They almost uniformly rejected the opportunity to escape (except Isaac for whom there was no offer of escape). It should be added that escape in their case meant forgoing their principles, the form of truth they had allegiance to or their religion.

Taking these main examples, we need to ask further, whether the reported sufferings they went through are a true representation. Are they influenced by any motive by their disciples or followers who reported or wrote to elevate their images? Are the attitudes expressed in these writings exactly the attitudes of those people or later reflections of their attitude in view of the impact of the event on history? We do not have enough evidence to prove one or the other.

There is another form of question that has to be posed at this stage too. Let us assume that the attitude they had about their death was exactly the same as it has

been written. Are we allowed to ask a little further about the struggle in their personality? Did they really mean what they said at the time of their death?

However, there is a limit for a historian in asking questions. Isocrates' words should perhaps be taken seriously.

For things that happen in our own time, it is proper to judge in accordance with our own beliefs; but as regards things so long ago, it is proper for us to show our judgment to be in agreement with sensible men alive at that time (Isocrates, *Helen* 22).

In this chapter, we have tried to answer another important question. To what extent were the stories of Isaac, Socrates and Eleazar prevalent in the land of Jesus in his time? We have satisfactorily answered this question with a positive note. The Aqedah story of Isaac which is available through the writings of Josephus, Philo, Pseudo-Philo, 4 Maccabees and 4Q225 compels us to conclude that the story of Isaac was so prevalent and powerful enough among the martyrs for their inspiration during Jesus' time and even before.

The story of Socrates, even though Greek, was very probably prevalent in Greco-Roman Galilee and Judaea. This has been suggested primarily from the Greek linguistic prevalence during Jesus' time in his land. Moreover, the quotation from Justin Martyr gives additional support for the story of Socrates being compared with the story of Jesus in early Christian circles. Finally, the influence on the Maccabean literature by the Greco-Roman stories of martyrs gives us a separate link for the world of Jesus with the Greek world.

Chapter Four

ANALYSIS AND HISTORICITY

A. Analysis Of The Sources

1. Introduction

Our main role here is to segregate the possible literary sources for the Gethsemane prayer and to find out the interdependence between them, if any, and thereby to establish the accuracy of the literary evidence. This will later lead us to the accuracy of the event. In a way we are limiting our inquiry to the literary evidence in this section because it is essential to establish this level before entering into any further considerations.

With regard to the Gethsemane incident, there are five pieces of evidence from the Christian canon. They are the Gospels according to Matthew 26.36–46, Mark 14.32–42, Luke 22.39–46, John 12.27, 14.31, 18.1 and the Letter to the Hebrews 5.7–8.

2. Gethsemane Narrative in Mark (Mk 14.32–42)

In Mark, we read about the plotting of the arrest, the pouring of the oil by a woman, the betrayal plot by Judas Iscariot, the preparation for the Passover Supper, the partaking of the Passover Supper and the foretelling of Peter's denial just before the Gethsemane narrative. This is followed by the betrayal and arrest.

At the outset, we notice that the incident happens in a place (χωρίον) called Gethsemane. A little while ago, Jesus and the Twelve went out to the Mount of Olives in 14.26. This suggests that Gethsemane is a place in the Mount of Olives. 'They' here must denote Jesus and the Twelve if we take the sequence seriously. In v.32 itself, Jesus gives a command to his disciples (possibly, the Twelve), "Sit here while I pray".

In v.34 we have another command of Jesus, "remain here, and keep awake". On the one hand, if we take it as the continuation of that started at v.32, by the time we read v.35, we have three levels of operation. Jesus and the eleven disciples reach Gethsemane in the Mount of Olives. Jesus asks eight disciples to sit there while he prays. In the second stage, he asks the remaining three disciples to remain there and watch. A.T.Cadoux asks a very significant question in this context "why should it not have been said to the Eight as well as to the Three?" (Cadoux 1935:232). This is a relevant question that makes us take an alternative view of this text. Finally in the last stage, Jesus prays.

On the other hand, if we consider that Mark here combines two different existing traditions without trying to reconcile the information therein, we have here two traditions put together side by side. The presence of doublets in this passage has caused many difficulties in establishing the actual information in the oral tradition. A large number of suggestions have been made by scholars. However, if we are satisfied with what the author wrote (or the compiler compiled), it is possible to appreciate his emphasis in this pericope.

When we go further into the narrative, we should note the emotional condition of Jesus in v.33 and in v.34. The author writes in v.33 that Jesus “began to be distressed and agitated”. In addition, Jesus’ emotional condition is recorded in the reported speech in v.34, “I am deeply grieved, even to death”. It has to be noted that here also we have evidence of a doublet.

The next consideration of the narrative is about what Jesus prayed. Here again we have a doublet. V.35 has something about what Jesus prayed in the author’s words telling that Jesus “prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him”. On the other hand v. 36 has Jesus’ prayer in direct speech—“Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want”. It is important to note that there is a very important difference in the choice of metaphor between the first ‘hour’ and the second ‘cup’.

The remaining verses are mainly dedicated to describing the plight of the disciples, especially, their response to Jesus’ command and his personal emotions. Even though Jesus notices ‘them’ (more than just Peter) sleeping, he is addressing his strictures to Peter in vv.37b and 38. Interestingly, it is impossible to deduce from the text that all the three disciples were necessarily sleeping. Afterwards, Jesus went away and prayed, saying the same words. Probably this refers to v.36 rather than 35, because only in 36 does the author give the words of the prayer in direct speech. When he came the second time and the third time, they were still sleeping in spite of Jesus’ command to watch.

Vv.41 and 42 are the concluding remarks of Jesus at Gethsemane to the unwatchful disciples. He speaks to them fully aware of what is going to happen immediately afterwards. A reference to the betrayer Judas connects this passage thematically to the forthcoming passage.

Holleran envisages four possible meanings to ἕως θανάτου (Mk 14.34) which are supported by various scholars. They are ‘until death’, ‘sad to death’, ‘so sad I could die’ and ‘so sad I want to die’. According to him, Jesus’ final temptation was “the wish for peaceful and premature deliverance from his fate” (Holleran 1973:16). In our study, we argue that Jesus wanted to escape and his prayer was that he might be saved from his imminent death.

In his reading, ‘keeping awake’ has to be understood more than literally but not to the extent of Barrett’s eschatological rendering. Jesus prayed not simply to be spared the impending sufferings but to be saved according to the Father’s will from the hands of his betrayers (:22). In Mark and in the Qumran writings, the dichotomy between flesh and spirit is more clearly marked than Pauline writings. God has provided a willing spirit to Jesus and his friends but watchfulness and prayer are absolutely essential in maintaining a control over the weak flesh.

Like Mk 14.40, we see the disciples not knowing what to say in the context of the Transfiguration (Mk 9.6). The account of Transfiguration in Lk 9.32 has still more closer parallels with Gethsemane. Holleran concedes that this represents the development of the tradition which ultimately ended up in John completely omitting

the independent narratives of Gethsemane and the Transfiguration (:47). He further notes instances of the repetition of prayer, especially under trial, in the Rabbinic literature and 2 Cor 12.8. The puzzle about ἀπέχει remains unresolved⁵.

The passive voice in v.41, as in Mk 9.31 and 10.33, suggests that Jesus is not only delivered up by one of his own disciples, but also delivered up according to God's plan. We should give some attention to ἄββα due to its importance in the whole study of the New Testament and specifically for the study in which we are involved.

Abba

The initial words by Jesus in Mark "Abba, Father" give an idea about his view of God. The discussion on 'Abba' has been going on for a long time. Very specifically, the contribution by J.Jeremias was significant for the way scholars interpreted this particular word for decades. Therefore, we will summarise Jeremias' argument about the word that is relevant for our study.

In the words of D'Angelo, Jeremias' argument depends on a series of interrelated claims.

The first of these is that the word "abba" represents a special use of Jesus that was central to his teaching; second, that for Jesus it expressed a special kind of intimacy and tenderness deriving from its supposed origin in babytalk; third, that this practice was distinct from the usage of the early church; fourth, that it was distinct from the practice of Judaism (D'Angelo 1992a:612).

⁵ For the most recent discussions cf. Brown, C E 1994. *The Death of the Messiah*, 1379–1383; Müller, K W 1986. "Apechei (Mk 14.41)—absurda lectio?" *ZNW* 77, 83–100.

Following are the important issues. Did Jesus use the word ‘Abba’ to invoke God as a child addresses the father? Or is ‘Abba’ a word used by adults? Was Jesus the first one to use this expression? In early Judaism, are there examples in the context of prayer for invoking God as “My Father”? We need to look into the following three aspects for the sake of our present study.

1. Linguistic form and meaning of ἄββα

The phrase ἄββα ὁ πατήρ has been understood as a bilingual expression. The question has been raised about the case of the transliterated word ἄββα. Is it a vocative or just an emphatic form? Could it be a first person singular possessive? Certainly this word has been identified as Aramaic (and not Hebrew).

In Mark we see ἄββα ὁ πατήρ, in Matthew πάτερ μου and in Luke πάτερ. Jeremias explains this as the result of variant translations (Jeremias 1967:56). He further says that the reason for the variations “is that in the Palestinian Aramaic of the first century AD ܐܒܝܐ was used not only as a form of address, but also for the emphatic state and for the form with the first person singular suffix”. In support of the ἄββα ὁ πατήρ Jeremias gives Mk 5.41 as an example where ܐܬܝܬܝܬܝܢܝ is rendered as τὸ κοράσιον. Fitzmyer holds the view that the Aramaic form ‘abbā is “in the emphatic state, and that is why it turns up literally translated as *ho patēr* in Mark 14.36” (Fitzmyer 1985:903).

In all the three New Testament occurrences, ἄββα comes together with ὁ πατήρ instead of an expected πάτερ (Mk 14.36, Rm 8.15 and Gl 4.6). James Barr in two of his articles rules out the possibility of ἄββα meaning ‘daddy’ (Barr 1988a & 1988b). The word for ‘daddy’ πάπας or πάππας was available in Greek at that time. If Mark and Paul wanted to use that expression they could have done so. On the other hand, he argues that the unanimity of Greek rendering in the above three New Testament passages suggests the following. (i) “It was a rather literal rendering which sought to represent the different elements within the Semitic form” and (ii) “If so, it understood *’abbā* as in effect an emphatic state form and thus literally to be rendered ‘*the father*’” (Barr, 1988a:40).

It seems more probable that Jesus used the word ἄββα in Aramaic. However, as Holleran doubts, it is improbable that Jesus used two languages at the opening of his prayer, especially at the time of his crisis (Holleran 1973:24). As D’Angelo claims, it may be Mark’s redactional activity to put ἄββα and ὁ πατήρ together.

Regarding the ‘ἄββα ὁ πατήρ’, Holleran holds that it is a prayer formula, a stereotype existing prior to the Gospel of Mark in Gl 4.6 (49–50 CE) and Rm 8.15 (55 CE). He concludes “ἄββα was Jesus’ prayer, ὁ πατήρ an addition of the community, and the whole phrase became so set a formula that Mark or his source did not hesitate to attribute it as it stood to Jesus” (:26).

2. The link between the address of Jesus and the content of his prayer

There is a close link between calling God Father and the context of escape from death. Our examples are from the context of the prayers of Eleazar and Polycarp. Eleazar in 3 Macc 6.3 prayed to God addressing 'O Father' just before the king arrived at the hippodrome with the animals and all the arrogance of his forces to persecute Eleazar.

In this context, Eleazar also refers to Jonah who was watched over unharmed in the belly of the sea-born monster. Eleazar uses the words 'Father' two times in this section (3 Macc 6.3,8). It has to be noted that this prayer was said when the Jews were standing 'at the gates of death' (3 Macc 5.51). It looks as if there is a link between the context of death and the very title 'Father' used of God. In MPol 14.1, Polycarp looked up to heaven and said, "O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Child, Jesus Christ, ...". It is understandable that anyone will pray with the dearest image of God at a time of crisis. It is important to note these special contexts for the use of the analogy 'Father' for God even if there are also more general ones.

3. Theological significance of ἄββα in Jesus' prayer

It has been made more than clear that Jesus was not the first one to use a familial, intimate title like 'Father' to God. We may note in Greek literature that Zeus has been addressed in the context of prayer as *πάτερ* (Hom *Od.* 4.341, 20.201f; *Il.* 1.503,

etc.)⁶. Among the Hindu scriptures, *Rigveda* 4.17.17, 7.32.19, 8.1.6, 8.86.4 and 10.7.3 are important in this context as they compare the God figure with a father figure and someone dearer than father (Macdonnell & Keith 1912:526). Moreover, in *Bhagavadgītā* 11.43 Vishnu-Krishna has been extolled as the father of the world.

Schrenk argues that the concept of Father in the cosmology of Plato at first “simply served to explain the world, it prepared the way for a spread of the religious father concept. In so doing it also prepared the way for the influence of the witness of Jesus to the Father, though it differs profoundly from this” (Schrenk 1967:954).

In this context, we need to notice J.W.Miller’s observation on the father image of God. He claims that in the Bible this image is significantly different from the Babylonian *Enuma Elis*, the Canaanite *Baal* and the Egyptian *Osiris* and *Isis* (Miller 1985:347–354). The image of God in the Bible as ‘Father’ reminds us of both the power and authority of God and his love towards all who call to Him. On the other hand, the other three traditions which Miller compares have got a weak idea of Father where either the son or the mother has power and authority over the father. Mal 1.6 is a good example of the honour involved in this metaphor: “If then I am a father, where is the honour due to me?”.

The word ‘Abba’ was available in the first century land of Israel. God has been understood as father in different religious texts of Judaism (canonical and non-

⁶ cf. Schrenk, G 1967. “The Father Concept in the Indo-European World and Graeco-Roman Antiquity”. *TDNT* V, 948-959, for more references.

canonical). For example, we have three different kinds of texts. First, God has been *addressed* as ‘our father’ in Is 63.16 and Tob 13.4, ‘my father’ in Jr 3.4 and Ps 89.26 and ‘father’ in Sir 23.1 and 4. God’s love and reproof have been *compared* with a father’s love and reproof in Ps 103.13 and Pr 3.12. We have a third kind of text where Yahweh *addresses* the people of Israel as His first born, for example Ex 4.22 and Deut 32.6. In addition Sir 51.10 (Heb), 3 Macc 2.21, 5.7, 6.3,8, 7.6, Wis 2.16, 11.10, 14.3, Apocryphon Ezk. Fragn.3, 1QH 9.35, Jub 1.25,28, 19.29, Joseph and Aseneth 12.8, 14–15 and Ant 2.6.8 are also relevant in this context to understand God as ‘Father’.

If we look into Jewish literature, we have many more examples. Vermes argues that calling God ‘Father’ is a significant feature of Hasidic piety. He quotes an instance where the school children said to the Hasid, Hanan, grandson of Honi the Circle-Drawer “*Abba, Abba*, give us rain!”. In response he said to God “Lord of the universe, render a service to those who cannot distinguish between the *Abba* who gives rain and the *Abba* who does not” (*bTaan.23b*) (Vermes 1973:211). The Father in heaven has been contrasted with the father in earth in this passage. This passage speaks about God as *Abba* even though it does not record an address to God as *Abba*.

In addition, contrary to the observation of Jeremias, we have evidence now of the Psalm of 4Q372 1 where God is addressed as “My Father” (Schuller 1992:68).

¹⁶My Father and my God,

do not abandon me into the hands of the nations;

¹⁷do justice for me lest the afflicted and the poor perish...

4Q372 gives strong evidence for God being addressed as father in the context of prayer. The Psalmist here pleads that God may do justice for him or her lest the afflicted and the poor perish. It is connected with an individual's escape from the hands of the nations. It could possibly be connected with death too.

Within the two prayers recorded in the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus addresses God as "Abba, Father" in one prayer and in the other as "My God, My God". If we want to talk about the percentage of usage, it is 50% 'Father' and 50% 'God' in Mark. The sample is, however, very small. It is obvious this percentage changes in other Gospels. Yet it is important to understand each Gospel in its own right.

At face value, we need to agree therefore that Jesus did not address God always as 'Father'. Jesus understood God also in terms not related to father terminology. Among the four instances of God as 'Father' (Mk 8.38, 11.25, 13.32 and 14.36), 8.38 and 13.32 are in the context of 'Son' being mentioned and 11.25 and 14.36 are in the context of prayer. Therefore, we could conclude with the available evidence that for Jesus the term 'Father' was important when he wanted to pray and when he wanted to teach others to pray.

We have one good example in the Gospel according to Luke. Jesus rejoiced in the context of prayer and calls God freely as Father.

At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father

is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” Lk 10.21–22.

Even if many suspect later elaboration here the passage may well to some extent reflect the usage of Jesus.

Hurtado argues that a “corporate and liturgical use of “Abba” seems a more significant innovation than the possible individual use of the term by Jesus (Hurtado 1996:15 Feb). Quoting Gl 4.6 and Rm 8.15, he holds that “Abba” as a prayer/invocation form was “carried over into Greek-speaking churches probably because it was seen as already (by c.40–50 CE) a sacred liturgical expression that had developed among Aramaic-speaking Christian Jews” (:15 Feb).

Cargal makes the following proposal.

Suppose that early on members of Aramaic-speaking Christian communities who gave what was identified as Spirit-connected utterances in their native language frequently spoke of the Divine as “Abba”. This choice of vocative might become associated with Spirit-influenced speech (all that Paul explicitly claims in the Galatians and Romans Passages). If it also became a kind of proper name or fixed expression transferred to non-Aramaic speaking communities, we might even have an analogy...with Paul’s use of *maranatha* (1 Cor 16.22) the analogy extending to the transfer of the foreign expression, not necessarily origin in ecstatic speech (Cargal 1996:20 Feb).

Even though it is speculative, as Cargal himself agrees, it is important that Cargal connects ‘Abba’ with the spirit-influenced speech. The state of human beings at the stage of death is specifically more elated than at ordinary times. In that case, at least the Gethsemane context would indicate an elated state in Jesus and his being open to the world of heaven and uttering ‘Abba’.

While Jeremias argued for the uniqueness of Jesus in using “Abba”, D’Angelo goes too far to claim that “‘*Abba*’ cannot be attributed to Jesus with any certainty. It was certainly of significance in the early Greek-speaking Christian communities of Paul and Mark, where it expressed empowerment through the spirit” (D’Angelo 1992a: 630). Further, she claims that “‘father’ or ‘my father’ was used as an address to God and as an epithet for God in ancient Judaism. This is true particularly in contexts which appeal to God as a refuge for persecution or which seek forgiveness” (:630).

However, it has to be noted that her concern was to show that “Jesus’ possible use of *abba* or ‘father’ cannot be used to defend the normative nature and primacy of ‘father’ for twentieth century theology or to endow these words with special meaning” (D’Angelo 1992b:174). That is why she concludes in the following manner. “If indeed ‘father’ was used by Jesus, the context is less likely to be familial intimacy than resistance to the Roman imperial order” (D’Angelo 1992a:630).

However, D’Angelo here is more concerned about establishing the insufficiency of the father image for twentieth century theology than looking into the historical question of whether Jesus actually used that expression during his days.

It seems likely that Jesus did address God as *Abba* and that this does have some implications for his sense of sonship. However Jeremias overemphasised the uniqueness of the usage.

Addressing God as Father was not new in the Gospel tradition. However, it is significant that Jesus calls God Father at the time of his crisis, the time of his crucial decision. Eleazar invoked God before death with the same address. We see Polycarp also praying to God as “Father of your beloved and blessed Child, Jesus Christ” just before his death (MPol 14.1). The title “Father” was Jesus’ dearest image of God and it comes to the forefront at the time of his crisis. It has a link with the escape from death (Eleazar). There may be more examples which are not known to us where the title ‘father’ comes together in the context of escape from death. It is this aspect of Jesus’ use of *Abba* which is of special relevance to our study here.

2.1 Structural analysis of Markan narrative of Gethsemane:

The structural analysis is essential to determine the important components of the narrative. We see in the Markan narrative the following elements.

1. Setting of place
2. Setting of companions
3. Description of the emotional condition of the one who prays
4. Request for companionship
5. Prayer (described)
6. Disappointment about and reminder to the companions
7. Prayer
8. Continuous disappointment about the companions

9. Implied prayer

10. Departure with conviction

2.2 Structural Analysis of Gethsemane Prayer:

When we carefully analyse all the constituents of the Gethsemane prayer, we can see four important components.

“Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want” (Mk 14.36).

1. Invoking God

2. Acknowledging God’s almighty power

3. Expressing the need of Jesus

4. Submitting to God’s sovereign will

We notice here the absence of a prayer for vindication which is so common in this kind of prayers. For example, in *The Prayer of Azariah* 1–22, we have invocation, praising God, acknowledgement of God’s judgement, the prayer for accepting them as a burnt offering and the prayer for vindication. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (=Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) were in the midst of the flame when Azariah makes this prayer.

A doubt could be raised as to whether people who were under pressure were so systematic as to say particular elements of prayer which are meant for those situations. By all means, we see the arrangement executed by tradition or the

evangelist in the Gethsemane prayer. However, even in the midst of these influences, the way the evangelists have organised the material reflects the way they wanted to portray Jesus to their readers.

Resemblance with Eleazar's Prayer:

We have the prayer of Eleazar in 4 Macc 6.27–29. However, we have an oblique reference to his prayer in 2 Macc 6.30. One very important thing to be noticed here is that this prayer is spoken in public whereas Jesus' prayer is done in private.

You know, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I am dying in burning torments for the sake of the law. Be merciful to your people, and let our punishment suffice for them. Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs.

In Eleazar's prayer, we can trace the following elements.

1. Invoking God.
2. Acknowledging God's omniscience about Eleazar's power and his purpose.
3. Expressing his need for the sake of others.

The fourth element is missing due to his seeming certainty about God's will.

Resemblance with Stephen's Prayer:

According to Ac 7.59–60, "as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

This prayer has got the following components.

1. Invoking the Lord Jesus
2. Expressing Stephen's need
3. Expressing his need for others' sake.

Resemblance with Polycarp's Prayer: (MPol 14)

O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Child, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have received full knowledge of thee, the God of Angels and powers, and of all creation, and of the whole family of the righteous, who live before thee.

I bless thee, that Thou hast granted me this day and hour, that I may share, among the number of the martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, for the Resurrection to everlasting life, both of soul and body in the immortality of the Holy Spirit. And may I, today, be received among them before Thee, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as Thou, the God who lies not and is truth, hast prepared beforehand, and shown forth, and fulfilled.

For this reason I also praise Thee for all things, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through the everlasting and heavenly high Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Child, through whom be glory to Thee with him and the Holy Spirit, both now and for the ages that are to come, Amen.

In the case of Polycarp's prayer, the thanksgiving element is dominant. The following outline may be drawn from this prayer.

1. Invoking God
2. Thanksgiving
3. Expressing need
4. Praise

Here also we need to acknowledge the fact that this prayer was not done in private. Instead, it is done just before his martyrdom.

In fact, except the Gethsemane prayer, all the other three prayers are done in public. Except the Gethsemane prayer, all the other three prayers have got some elements for the sake of others. Except the Gethsemane prayer, all the other three prayers seem to express a clear certainty on the part of the one who prays.

2.3 Source Theories:

Single Source Theories

These theories are formulated mainly to explain the presence of the doublets in the Gethsemane narrative. The primary presupposition of these theories is that wherever there are doublets, either they are both redactional or one of them is original and the other is redactional. According to these theories, there is no place for thinking that both could be original. Holleran is right in saying that if someone operates from such a premise, “it is not difficult to see why on this assumption Mark’s Gethsemane account, where every verse is a doublet of some other, must prove largely redactional in the analysis” (Holleran 1973:129).

Johannes Weiss, Emil Wendling, Alfred Loisy, Maurice Goguel, Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Dibelius, Hans Lietzmann, Jack Finegan, Eduard Lohse, Eta Linnemann and others have formulated such theories to explain the editorial history of the Markan narrative where a single source and the hand of the narrator are at work in Mark (cf. Holleran 1973:112–130). They all work on the assumption that all elements of the

Gethsemane narrative could be traced back to a single source that is behind it or to the redactional activity of Mark.

Multiple Source Theories

These theories leave most elements of the narrative to one or another source and attribute only the minimum to the editorial activity of Mark.

Otto Procksch, Wilhelm Bussmann, Wilfred L.Knox, Thorleif Boman, Rudolf Thiel, Emanuel Hirsch, Karl Georg Kuhn, Theodor Lescow, Pierre Benoit and others have tried to identify more than one source and the editorial activity by the author in Mark (cf. Holleran 1973:130–145).

2.4 Gethsemane narrative in the larger context of Mark:

J.P.Heil divides the whole chapter of Mk 14 into 9 scenes in 3 sets of intercalations. They are arranged revolving around three events namely Anointing for burial, Prediction about betrayal and Acceptance of death through prayer. Heil tries to establish “what this intricate narrative structure of successive intercalations causes its reader to experience in order to produce the meaning latent in the text and thus to bring its act of communication to completion” (Heil 1990:305–332).

The references to the places and the time are taken very seriously in each set and they have significant connotations. The contrasts between friends and enemies, plotting leaders and happy followers are important to explain the narrative significance. This

helps us to see how the different groups act differently towards the end to the extent of identifying with Jesus and running away from him.

In the initial section, 14.1–11, the plot of Jewish leaders, the anticipation of the death of Jesus during the meal and the plan of Judas to betray Jesus form the coherent group. The second section (14.12–25) consists of the direction given to prepare the Passover meal, prediction by Jesus of betrayal, and sharing the triumph over death through the Passover meal. In 14.26–52 which is the third section, we see the prediction of Jesus about abandonment by the disciples, Jesus' acceptance of death through prayer and Jesus' arrest, betrayal and abandonment.

Heil argues that the way each scene is described and arranged is to convince the readers of the scriptural fulfilment in the life of Jesus and in turn, the fulfilment of the words of Jesus themselves. Through this structure, the reader “experiences a succession of alternating scenes which form a network of intercalations involving the theme of opposition to and separation from Jesus on his way to death on the one hand, and the theme of close union with Jesus on his way to death on the other hand”. This is a very helpful contribution as we look into the overall setting of the Gethsemane Prayer in Mark.

Mark Kiley suggests that “part of one of the Hallel Psalms offered material to the early church with which to elaborate Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives” (Kiley 1986:655–659). He makes this suggestion because of the reflection of the cry of the psalmist (Ps 116:4) in Jesus' cry (Mk 14:36a). Both have the context of the plea for

rescue from death. So he makes the suggestion that the early church has used Ps 116:4 to help shape Jesus' prayer in Mk 14:36a.

He emphasises the formative role of the Psalms in the Passion Narrative. He argues that "many of the events of Mark 14 could have been perceived by the early church to reflect the experience of the 'pray-er' of Psalm 116". He claims that the betrayal, denial and false witness, the focus on the cup and the anointing by the woman would have reminded the early communities of the experience of the just one of Psalm 116.

To name the dominant similarities, the Psalmist's distress and anguish are like Jesus' anguish at Gethsemane (Ps 116.3). The Psalmist prays for escape: 'O Lord, I pray, save my life' (116.4). He describes the righteous, merciful and protecting nature of the Lord (116.5,6). Jesus acknowledges at Gethsemane that everything is possible with God. The reference to the cup of salvation reminds us of the cup of Gethsemane (116.13). In spite of many references to deliverance, the reference to the death of God's faithful ones is a striking one in the Psalm (116.15). The death of the faithful one is precious in the sight of the Lord. This reminds us of Jesus' death in spite of his prayer for escape.

According to Kiley, Paul believed that the early common meal should contain reflection on the meaning of Jesus' death. So, he suggests that the early church used the fourth verse of Ps 116 to fill in part of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. Towards the end, he admits that his thesis is necessitated partly by the difficulties of understanding the prayer as coming from first-hand witnesses.

However, two points have to be noted at this juncture. One is our reference about the difficulty in taking for granted that there was no eyewitness. The other point is, that Jesus being a pious Jew, could by all means have learned the Psalms well and used them at the time of his own distress. This need not deny the authenticity of Jesus' words in 14.36.

3. Gethsemane narrative in Matthew

We will concentrate in this section on a few features of the Matthean version of the Gethsemane incident. The first one is to do with λυπεῖσθαι. This word comes in the place of ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι in Mark. Probably, Matthew avoids the complication of the word ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι by using λυπεῖσθαι which is in keeping with περίλυπός of the following verse. ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ in the place of Markan ἔπιπτεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς also is significant. Falling on one's face conveys the idea of a more honourable position than falling on the ground. Our third observation is to do with the absence of a reference to ὥρα during the prayer in Matthew though it is there in v.45.

The sentence "For you all things are possible" is not found in Matthew. Instead, the first prayer itself leaves the option "if it is possible". The affirmation of God's almighty nature seems to be missing. The change in Jesus is so visible in Matthew during the prayer itself. The change from "if it is possible" (Mt 26.39) to "if this cannot pass unless I drink it" (Mt 26.42) is a significant one and it shows the effect of the prayer on Jesus. The prayer has helped him to recognise gradually the

unavoidable nature of his suffering. It is unavoidable because it is his Father's will. His only concern was that he should do his Father's will.

Ruprecht concedes that in Matthew, prayer reconciles the individual to the painful and burdensome will of God. Here, the resoluteness is earned, not just anticipated. The progression in Jesus' spiritual reasoning is quite clear. "Whereas Jesus' first prayer *wonders* what is possible, his second prayer *concludes* that it is not possible for the cup to pass" (Ruprecht 1992:6–7). At the end, there is no mention of Jesus' will at all. His only role is that of the obedient servant. Tension and ambiguity are characteristic of Matthew's narrative. Ruprecht feels that Matthew's is the most explicitly incarnational of the four performances of the *mythos* which later became the base for the creeds at Nicea and Chalcedon. Jesus is *two* things, at once.

4. Gethsemane narrative in Luke

The special features of the Lukan narrative will be dealt with here. The Lukan narrative is distinctly brief in comparison with the Markan narrative and at the same time more specific details are included than in Mark. The important features to be accounted for are as follows. (i) κατὰ τὸ ἔθος (ii) The omission of the name Γεθσημανὶ (Mk 14.32, Mt 26.36).

We concentrate here on the special aspects of the Lukan narrative to understand how Luke portrays Jesus going through this important part of his life – prayer before death. Holleran holds the view that Luke enhanced the dignity of Jesus by some

subtle changes. Fitzmyer believes that “the Lucan account is clearly inspired by the Marcan” (Fitzmyer 1985:1437). In Luke the detail about the singing of Hymns is not mentioned. ‘As was his custom’ in 22.39 is characteristic of Luke (cf. 1.9, 2.42). It is worth noting, according to Lukan description, that Jesus voluntarily goes to a place that is known to all the disciples. He does this in spite of the fact that he had already predicted that one among the disciples would betray him (Lk 22.41).

Another important difference we need to note is about the saying of Jesus to the disciples “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial”. This has to be seen in contrast to Jesus himself praying and asking his disciples just to sit there while he prays. While Jesus in Mark and Matthew prays, Jesus in Luke instructs the disciples to pray before he prays. This difference could not be emphasised too much because the instruction to pray comes in Markan and Matthean accounts in a later stage. The phrase “that you may not enter into temptation” will be discussed in the next chapter.

The description *θεῖς τὰ γόνατα*, which literally means ‘placing the knees’ is unique to Luke. Mark has got *ἐπιπτεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* and Matthew has got *ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ* in the same place. In Lukan writing we can see similar expressions in Ac 7.60, 9.40, 20.36 and 21.5 also. While *εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν* characterises both Mark (indirect speech) and Matthew (direct speech), *εἰ βούλει* marks Lukan narrative.

There is definitely a difference between saying ‘if it is possible’ and ‘if you are willing’. The former is more than asking the latter, if we think of an Almighty God.

Everything that is willed by the Almighty God should be possible to be accomplished. On the other hand everything that is possible need not be willed by God. Therefore, the distinction which Luke makes has to be taken seriously to understand his portrayal of Jesus.

Verses 43 and 44 are a cause of controversy among scholars when we come to determine what is the original text. While the third edition of UBS Greek New Testament (1983) rates the text without these verses as C, the fourth revised edition (1993) rates the text without these two verses as A. This itself is a good indication of the varying opinion among scholars about the originality of the text. The two verses are found in the following mss. and versions: $\aleph^{*,2}$ D L Δ^* 1 Q 0233 f^1 13^c 157 180 205 565 597 700 828^{1/2} 892* 1006 1010 1071^c 1241 1243 1292 1342 1424 1505 *Byz* [E F G H Q] / 184^{1/2} it^a, aur, b, c, d, e, ff2, i, l, q, r1 vg syr^c, p, h, pal cop^{bopt} eth slav Diatessaron^{arm} Justin Irenaeus^{gr} Hippolytus^{acc. to Theodore} Origen^{dub} Ps-Dionysius Arius^{acc.to Epiphanius} Eusebian Canons Didymus^{dub} Epiphanius Chrysostom Theodore Nestorius Theodoret all versions and most Greek mss^{acc. to Anastasius-Sinaita} John-Damascus; Hilary Greek and Latin mss^{acc. to Jerome} Augustine Quodvultdeus. The two verses are not found in the following mss and versions: \mathfrak{P}^{69vid} \mathfrak{P}^{75} \aleph^1 A B N T W 579 1071* Lect^{1/2} it^f syr^s cop^{sa, bopt} arm geo some Greek mss^{acc. to Anastasius-Sinaita}; Greek and Latin mss^{acc. to Hilary} Ambrose Jerome.

Fitzmyer, however, would like to omit these two verses in his consideration for the following reasons.

(1)*lectio brevior potior*; (2) they have no counterpart in the parallel Synoptic accounts; (3) they militate against the thrust of the Lucan passage in that they add emotional details to what is otherwise a sober abridgment of the Marcan text; (4) they are absent from the oldest ms. of Luke (P⁷⁵); and (5) they betray later parennetic or hortatory concerns (Fitzmyer 1985:1444).

According to Ruprecht, Luke desires a world in which God's will is all in all. God is subject and human beings are objects. The strength to withstand suffering comes from the anticipation of suffering. Our own wills are transformed by God's. The distance between Jesus and his disciples steadily increases. God does not wish to take the suffering cup away (Ruprecht 1992:1–25).

While περίλυπός is absent in Luke as Jesus is described, Luke uses ἀπὸ τῆς λύπης with the disciples as an explanation of the disciples' lethargy. This has a very important implication in our study. Neyrey in his article "The Absence of Jesus' emotions ..." argues that περίλυπός that characterised the Marcan description is lacking in Luke for specific reasons (Neyrey 1980:153–171). Stoic philosophy lists λύπη, φόβος, ἐπιθυμία and ἡδονή as the four classes of passions. According to Cicero, passions are movements of a disobedient soul (*Tusc. Disp* III.7). Plutarch says that one who grieves commits a sin (*Vit. Mor.* 449D). Cicero writes that λύπη further leads one to infamous passions. Neyrey argues that "it could seem highly improper that Jesus be presented as afflicted by λύπη, for this would imply that he was subject to evil passions, irrational, out of control and defeated" (:155). After a brief survey, he concludes that "λύπη is 1) one of the

cardinal passions, 2) a typical punishment for sin, and 3) an indication of guilt” (:157).

Expressions of emotions are not generally associated with Jesus. The word ἐμβριμάομαι does not occur in Luke. ὀργή is associated with the wrath of the end-time (3.7, 21.23) and ὀργίζομαι is used only in the parables of Jesus (14.21, 15.28).

The omissions of Jesus’ coming to the disciples three times and the direct and indirect forms of prayer are also very clear indications of a desire to portray Jesus in moral control. Luke is achieving brevity but also a shift of emphasis. In addition, Neyrey takes ἀγωνία as ‘combat’. Jesus’ combat is against λύπη. Therefore he holds that “Jesus is not escaping the ‘cup’ or ‘temptations’, for γενόμενος ἐν ἀγωνία functions for Jesus as εἰσελθεῖν εἰς πειρασμόν does for his disciples” (:163).

On the whole, we could very well agree that Luke has enhanced the portrait of Jesus well as we compare it with that of Mark.

5. Traces of Gethsemane in John

The main question that is posed when we look at John is why does the struggle of Gethsemane seem to be missing from it. We have noticed earlier that the word ‘garden’ which is associated with Gethsemane is from John. Yet one will not miss

noticing John 18.1, 12.27 and 14.31 which have motifs found in the Synoptic Gethsemane narrative.

While Dodd (1963:69ff) argues for John's independence in writing Jn 12.27–30 because of the difference between John and Mark, Barrett (1978:425) argues that the difference could be explained in terms of the usage and interest of John in general. Νῦν ἡ ψυχὴ μου τετάρακται is a statement affirming Jesus' emotional condition. The context of a pre-arrest dilemma has been accepted by most commentators. Barrett holds that Mark's use of Ps 42(41) would have convinced John to use the same Psalm more than Mark himself (:425). Πάτερ, σῶσον με of v.27 stands just in parallel to πάτερ, δόξασόν σου of v.28. If we need to look at the resemblance between Mark and John, the first part looks like Jesus' own will and the second part seems his Father's will. In Johannine thought, a prayer for deliverance from suffering and death is impossible. On the other hand, as Barrett writes "The Markan narrative gives the impression that even at the last moment there might have been an alternative to crucifixion, though if crucifixion should be the will of the Father Jesus would not refuse it" (:425).

As Ruprecht views John's portrayal of Jesus, there is no logical or consistent connection between the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane and Jesus' clarity of purpose. There is no unclarity anywhere in the Johannine portrait of the Christ. His will is his Father's. The Father is with him always. Jesus is a hero of astonishing resolve. It is only the crowd that wavers. He commands Peter to sheathe the sword "The cup

which my Father has given me—shall I not drink it?”. John retains only the betrayal. There is neither prayer nor temptation. The very phrases which had lent such poignancy to the Synoptic Passion narrative are used now in a voice dripping with irony (Ruprecht 1992:6–8).

6. Traces of Gethsemane in Hebrews

Heb 5.7 has been traditionally interpreted as echoing the Prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane. However, recently this has been challenged by Attridge and others. Therefore it is worth looking into this verse closely.

ὁς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας,

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission (Heb 5.7).

The primary objections of Attridge to accept Heb 5.7 as a reference to the Gethsemane Prayer are as follows.

1. None of the Synoptic accounts reports “loud cries and tears”.
2. It is not easy to conceive of how Jesus’ prayer that the cup pass from him was “heard”.
3. No precise indication of the time when Jesus’ prayers were offered can be inferred from the expression ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ.

The following answers could be given to the above questions of Attridge. (1) The terminologies used to describe the emotion and agony of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels are in line with “loud cries and tears”. (2) If we take ‘if you are willing’ as an integral part of the prayer, it is very hard to say that Jesus’ prayer was not heard. (3) Attridge himself is willing to accept that “It is certainly unlikely that the description refers to some specific episode of Jesus at prayer unconnected with his passion” (Attridge 1989:148). As far as we know, the Gethsemane prayer and the cry from the cross are the only occasions Jesus seems to pray verbally. If that is the case, there is more probability to take the Gethsemane prayer as being cited here than to consider the cry from the cross.

Wickham notes that the verb προσφέρειν occurs 19 times more in the Epistle, 18 of them in the clear sense of *offering sacrifice*. He further mentions that “the ‘prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears’, coupled as they were with ‘godly fear’ and ‘obedience’ are viewed as part at least of the High Priest’s offering, as it is explained in ch.x.5–10” (Wickham 1922:35). In the light of the overall tone of the epistle, it is appropriate to think that at least the author of the book thought of Jesus’ death as a priestly offering. However, this does not give any suggestion for Jesus thinking of his death as a sacrifice.

W.L.Lane opines that “in v.7 Jesus’ passion is described in its entirety as priestly prayer, taking advantage of the expression of those psalms that were interpreted within the Christian communities in the light of Jesus’ passion” (Lane 1991:120).

The Letter to the Hebrews clearly demonstrates a later tradition where much meaning has been added to the life of Jesus.

7. Conclusion

The Gospels according to Mark, Matthew, Luke, John and the Letter to the Hebrews have written about the Gethsemane incident in one way or other. They have significant differences between each other. This is basically due to the writer's (or editor's) own encounter with the person of Jesus or with the early Christian movement or both. Even if it is true that the sayings of Jesus had been preserved with great care, the way each one wrote has to do with the different opinion he had formed about the incident and/or his own purpose in putting the story together. Therefore, the writings have to be taken independently on their own merits. The parallels that we notice should not in any case attenuate the importance we should give to the unique usage of a particular piece of information by a specific author.

However, if we take Gethsemane as the theme of our study, most of the information comes from the Synoptic Gospels. That is why the major themes that we choose later on are all from the Synoptic Gospels. It does not in any way suggest that we give a lesser authority to John or Hebrews.

B. The Historicity Of The Prayer At Gethsemane

1. Introduction

Various arguments have been put forward against the authenticity of accounts of the life and work of the historical Jesus. It is worth considering the individual instances or narratives in order to establish the historicity of the instances individually. In our present study, it is appropriate to examine thoroughly the historicity of the Prayer at Gethsemane.

We have reports from the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the incident under question. The variations in the reports are very obvious and to be noted as we establish the historicity of the incident. During this process, it is worth distinguishing the historicity of the event, historicity of the verbal report and the historicity of the meaning of the event. As J.D.Crossan stated, “No historian lives in a vacuum of absolute objectivity” (Crossan 1991:1201). Yet our responsibility is to delineate the threads of history which could be derived from those evangelists who wrote about the event and its meaning.

E.Powell thought that the narrative about Gethsemane and its truth is “not that of history; it is that of poetry, of imagination” (Powell 1977:87). He concedes that “the narrator has deliberately, and even superfluously, by the narrative itself removed the possibility of a source” (:87). Yet it is our task to find out what happened with the help of the available data.

2. Limitations

First, we have only the tradition of literature to verify the incident. By this statement, it is taken that we do not have any eyewitnesses today to cross-examine. One doubt could be raised at this point. Is there nothing more than the evidence from literature? How about the impacts this particular incident has made in the past twenty centuries? Are they to be considered as historical? In examining the prayer, is it not valid to consider this aspect?

Secondly, the cultural assumptions appreciated by the author or the composer and the intended readers are definitely different from the historian who wishes to reconstruct the event in the twentieth century. Simple history that does not embrace the value and evaluations of the people cannot be comprehensive. In fact, it is not practically possible to have such a simple history. In other words, to understand the whole truth, the premise of analysis supported by logic is not enough. So, if history wants to claim to be true, it has to embrace the aspects of a value system and evaluations that are not necessarily always logical.

Thirdly, the language used by the narrator and the meaning given to the words could be substantially different from the language of the historian. It could be true that these particular texts are a different form of literature from a historical text. The category of 'history' probably is not enough to comprehend fully the meaning and the impact of the literature.

Finally, it is essential to grapple with the event behind the text (in our present case, texts). The event is more than the description of it in the form of text. This will help us to go a little further in ascertaining the intention of the event. If going to the event itself is difficult, how difficult will it be to find out the intention of the event!

3. Methodology

In analysing the Gethsemane Prayer, is there a methodology that we can follow? Each scholar tends to start from his/her own viewpoint. Can we have a comprehensive understanding of the historicity of the prayer? There seems to be confusion about the method people follow to ascertain historicity.

First, let us find out where we start. The type of historical investigation with which we are involved requires obviously an unbiased, sincere inquirer. Can we take the text as the starting point? An affirmative answer is impossible for this question. The reason is that the 'text' or 'texts' we have are themselves under scrutiny. One could even go as far as to say that we do not have a text at all. What we have is only 'interpretations' of the text.

If we have that much difficulty about the text, can we start our investigation from the stand-point of faith, for example, Christian faith? There are two problems involved here. One is something to do with the variant forms of Christian faith. That is to say, the fundamental differences among the various forms of Christian faith. There is nobody who is authorised to judge which one is the original Christian faith. The

other problem is, if there is a contradiction between the 'original faith' (if at all it could be established) and the actual event of the Gethsemane prayer, how do we find out the truth? Therefore, a historian cannot conduct this present investigation simply through his view of faith.

Therefore, shall we say that our starting point is 'zero-point', where we do not hold any personal bias towards anything or anybody? Is this starting-point practically possible? I would say this is a major problem in our methodology.

Nineham calls it the temptation of the historical age "to answer the questions, not in terms of the cultural assumptions of the original community but in terms of the questioner's own assumptions" (Nineham 1976:7). He argues that the historical events and cultures reach us through the cultural attitudes and assumptions of the community in question and we should not accept them as they are. Instead they should be used as 'the statements of witnesses'. Therefore, Nineham says that this issue causes problems for a religious tradition that claims that "the essential truth of things was revealed once for all in the context of the life, outlook and institutions of one particular cultural community" (:8). According to him, religion can never be a transcultural phenomenon. Religious language and beliefs are closely connected with the language and beliefs about all other things.

F.Martin in the process of distinguishing a theological notion from what 'really happened' makes some invaluable comments. He traces the twofold hermeneutical spiral that is at work. One is to do with the historical and philological disciplines that

are mainly concerned with 'explanation'. The second one is to do with the interaction between what we have achieved with the level of 'explanation' and 'what is understood at the level of faith' (Martin 1988:594f).

Martin argues that the historians are not simply narrators because they give reasons for what happened. Poets also, according to Martin, are producing story together with causal skeletons, but without a process of argumentation. In that sense, he categorises most of the biblical narrative and specifically Mk 14.32–43 as poetic texts. He gives a few examples from the Bible: "This occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God..." (2 Ki 17.7ff), The death of Jesus is due to "the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Ac 2.23) and is destined "for us" (Eph 5.1–2; 1 Tm 2.6 Gl 2.20, etc.), "for our sins" (Gl 1.4, 1 Cor 15.3, etc.), and "to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3.8). Martin argues that the Markan text makes, or remakes, the event from words. During that process, "Mark bears testimony to an interior dimension of an event, which is at the same time the interior dimension of the whole Passion process" (Martin 1988:596).

Secondly, should the reason for the investigation influence the procedure of the investigation? In a way, this problem is connected with the first problem. However, it is very important. In the first instance, why do we ask a question at all? Why do we investigate the historicity of the Gethsemane prayer? Is it to substantiate something else? Or to ask a still deeper question, why are we interested in Gethsemane at all? Is it because of a person associated with this place? Is it because of a special relevance of that person in the historian's life? Or is it to prove or

disprove the importance of that person? Or for what reason are we interested in an incident that happened two thousand years ago in a corner of a small mount of this big world? My point here is, any methodology that we follow should not be chosen and implemented just for his interest alone since this incident is special to the historian. Our choice and application of a methodology should be impartial or if that is not possible should guard against evident partiality.

Thirdly, I should mention the problem of circular arguments in a historical investigation like ours. For example it is unjustified to dismiss any historical tradition in the narrative due to the purposeful avoidance of any eyewitness in the narrative and then to use the elements of the narrative to support or to negate the historical validity.

Fourthly, what is the dividing line between fact and fiction? Recently, there have been discussions mentioning the validity of poetry and various other forms of literature where imagination is also an integral part in our search for historical truth. Human minds are capable of disseminating and receiving the facts through a medium other than that of the historical format. Therefore, it is another problem for a modern historian to draw a clear scientific line between fact and fiction.

Finally, a word about value systems and belief systems is in order here. Language about 'bare facts' is misleading. History could be understood only in combination with the value systems and the belief systems of a time, place and people. We cannot disentangle history from values and beliefs. This consideration is applicable both to

the person or incident in question and to the person who asks the question. The values and the beliefs of both the parties are very much part of the reconstruction of history. While discussing the problem of historicity, W.Schadewaldt writes that the “concept of the historical Jesus is governed first by facticity, positive facticity; secondly by causality; thirdly by compensating plausibility; fourthly by psychologizing; and fifthly by inner development”, but “antiquity did not base its biographies on causality, plausibility and inner development ... but on two things, πράγματα and λόγοι, τὰ πραχθέντα καὶ τὰ λεχθέντα” (Schadewaldt 1985:111f).

4. Some Scholars Who Question the Historicity

Many have followed Bultmann in rejecting the historicity of the Gethsemane Prayer. Bultmann says “this is originally an individual story of a thorough-going legendary character, which has not survived intact in Mark” (Bultmann 1963:267). He further says “v.38 is in all probability a saying introduced from the language of Christian edification” (:268). For him, the fact that John was able to drop the scene without damage to his general plan proves that the scene was itself out of its context (:277). Reckoning the story of Gethsemane as a faith- or cult- legend, he goes on to suggest that ‘it could well have originated in an Hellenistic Christianity of a Pauline sort’. He supposes that “it takes that moment of the Christ-myth formulated by Paul in Phil 2.8: γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου and brings it to a perceptual form”

(:306). Together with 'Trial before the Sanhedrin', he attributes the Gethsemane pericope to a later stage of tradition.

According to Kelber, "Mark presents the passion narrative at least partially as an argument against Christians who deny a passion Christology. There is, therefore, what might be called a Christological necessity imposed upon Mark to make the disciples look worse as the Gospel moves into the passion events. It is in this spirit that Mark creates the Gethsemane story and interpolates it at the threshold of the passion" (Kelber 1971:543).

Reumann would like to see the touch of the early church in the words of Jesus. He remarks

Not only the narratives about Jesus but the words of his lips are touched by the Gospel faith of the early church and (early Christians believed) by the Spirit of the Lord. The voice of the earthly Jesus is blended with the voice of the heavenly Lord – until, for the early church, the words become the Word of God (Reumann 1970:109).

The Five Gospels presented by R.W.Funk, R.W.Hoover and the Jesus Seminar is predominantly an exercise in scholarly democracy. The determination of the authentic sayings of Jesus has been done by voting. According to this book, the Gethsemane pericope of the Synoptic Gospels contain neither red letters (Jesus undoubtedly said this or something like it) nor pink letters (Jesus probably said something like this). The phrase "pray that you may not come into the time of trial" has been given gray rating (that means, Jesus did not say this, but the ideas contained in it are close to his own). All other direct speeches in the Gethsemane pericope are

given black colour, depicting that 'Jesus did not say' those and they 'represent the perspective or content of a later or different tradition' (Funk, et al 1993:119f). Surprisingly enough, the whole of the Gospel according to Mark has got just one sentence that has got red rating. It is very dangerous to depend on the majority for asserting the historical truth. The history of the history itself would testify to this.

R.E.Brown expresses his uncertainty in the following words.

I posit that early Christians had a tradition that before he died Jesus struggled in prayer about his fate. I do not know whether they retained or claimed to retain accurate memories of the wording he used; more probably they did not. But they understood his prayer in terms like the hour and the cup, which in the tradition of his sayings he had used to describe his destiny in God's plan. They fleshed out the prayer tradition in light of the psalms and of their own prayers, both of which they associated with Jesus' way of praying. Each evangelist (and his tradition before him) knew different forms of that tradition, and each developed it differently both before and in the course of fitting it into his narrative (Brown 1994:225f).

5. Some Scholars Who Support the Historicity

C.K.Barrett argues that the last word of Jesus makes sense only 'if Jesus had been expecting God to act in his vindication before his death, and knew now that his hope was to be disappointed' (Barrett 1967:48).

Benoit says, "The fear of Jesus in the face of death was so disturbing to faith. How could anyone have dared to invent such a scene? This story was handed down because it was true" (Benoit 1969:22).

In the same line Beck argues that “The notion of Jesus praying to escape is too radical, too much at variance with the general picture the Gospels give of him, to be an invention”. So, certainly it is not a fabrication (Beck 1988:57).

Fitzmyer emphatically argues that the Gethsemane prayer can not be a fabrication. Even though the echoes of the tradition Jn 12.27, 18.11 and Heb 5.7 “scarcely establish the connection with an event and a prayer in the life of the historical Jesus, they do argue in favour of a presumption that the story is not a fabrication out of whole cloth” (Fitzmyer 1985:1439).

Van Tilborg argues that the Lord’s Prayer is a liturgical reflection upon the Gethsemane story. “In the congregation of Mark the Lord’s Prayer was not known but it originated in a liturgical reflection upon the Gethsemane story. This conclusion is strengthened by the observation that both in Matt 26.36–46 and in Lk 22.39–46 the influence of the Lord’s Prayer can be demonstrated” (Van Tilborg 1972:104).

In a way Goguel argues for the historicity of the meaning of the prayer. He says

The striking contrast between the trouble and the anguish of Jesus and the serenity which he is said to have manifested from the moment he was arrested prove that this tradition could only have been formed at a time when Jesus realized that he was caught in a net from which it was impossible to escape, he passed through an experience of positive agony, and that he had to struggle in order to be able to accept what he believed to be the will of God. Although this incident cannot be regarded as literally accurate, on a higher plane it is true. In an admirable allegory it expresses what took place in the soul of Jesus (Goguel 1933:495).

R.S.Barbour concludes that “in the Gethsemane anguish and prayer we have a confrontation with the power of evil and darkness, and an overcoming of it through obedience, which are recognizably historical phenomena but yet go beyond what any of the Gospel writers has succeeded in describing” (Barbour 1970:250).

6. Three Levels of Investigation

The historicity of the Prayer at Gethsemane has to be looked at from three different levels.

- a. The historical accuracy of the narratives.
- b. The historical accuracy of the event.
- c. The historical accuracy of the meaning of the event.

It is essential to explain these three categories before proceeding.

6.1. The Historical Accuracy of the Narratives:

We have three Synoptic narratives namely Mt 26.36–46, Mk 14.32–42 and Lk 22.39–46. Apart from these narratives, we have specific references to the prayer at Gethsemane in Jn 12.27–29, 14.31, 18.11 and Heb 5.7–10. The first question to be addressed is whether any particular narrative is historically accurate. Can there be more than one accurate narrative?

However, it is wise to admit that the authors of the different narratives are creative persons who used their languages and concepts to make the incident sensible to the

reader. Therefore, technically it is impossible to have two identical narratives unless copying has occurred. If one is a copy, we cannot call the writer either the author or the historian. Instead, he is just a copier.

6.2. The Historical Accuracy of the Event:

Another level from which we need to look at this prayer is the historical accuracy of the event. The questions like the where, when, who, what, how of the event have to be answered accurately at this level. To state it briefly, Jesus and his disciples were involved in this event; Jesus prayed to the Father that if it is his will, the cup might be taken away from him; this incident happened in a place called Gethsemane just before his arrest and crucifixion. The accuracy has to be ascertained here.

How much agreement is there between different narratives is another criterion we could apply. Francis Martin argues that here we are dealing with something that ‘really happened’. He gives two reasons for saying that a historical event is the basis for what we are talking about.

1. The multiplicity of the New Testament witness
2. The unlikelihood that the early community would have created such a scene.

He further argues that the Synoptic location of the event—‘a small estate on the Mount of Olives’ and the Synoptic time of the event, just before Jesus’ arrest are

correct (Martin 1988:579). The second is the stronger argument as the accounts may not be independent of one another.

The historicity of the Gethsemane prayer could be examined from the following points of view:

1. The possibility of an eyewitness of the incident.
2. Problems in considering Psalms as the generative texts of Gethsemane.
3. The misunderstanding about the 'sleeping of the disciples'.
4. Multiple textual evidence.
5. The obvious variation of the theme of escape.

The Possibility of an Eyewitness of the Incident:

Barbara Saunderson, in her convincing article, has given sufficient arguments to rule out the popular assumption that there was no eyewitness to the Gethsemane incident. If all the disciples were sleeping, who heard Jesus praying with these words? This has been a major question to be answered. However, Saunderson argues that the supposition that nobody else was there other than the disciples 'cannot be proved and may even not be probable' (Saunderson 1989:225).

It is true that Jesus wanted solitude for prayer. He made sure that only three disciples came near the place of prayer and he left even those three at a distance before his prayer. However, Saunderson argues that it was impossible to get absolute solitude on the night of the Last Supper.

As she enlists the viewpoints of various scholars about the historicity of the accounts of Jesus' Prayer at Gethsemane, she makes it clear that "there is no logical obstacle to assuming that the disciples could have heard something before falling asleep, or even to the supposition that there might have been more about which we know nothing because sleep intervened" (Saunderson 1989:224).

The main point of her article is a possible witness, the clue which we have already in the Markan description. We read about a certain young man who followed him and narrowly escaped from being arrested himself (Mark 14.51–52). Saunderson rightly asks the question "Is there any possibility that the young man could himself have been at Gethsemane while Jesus was praying?". She analyses the suggestions of various scholars about this young man. 'A curious sightseer', 'John Mark', 'a stranger', 'someone who lived nearby' and 'a man who was later converted to Christianity and whose memories thus became part of the tradition' are some of them. She also makes note of the "numerous speculations" which "emphatically invalidate the suggestion that the youth could have been within earshot of Jesus' prayer".

Later on she talks about the dress of the young man, which possibly made some scholars deduce that 'he was in haste, either without time to dress, or with a sheet in lieu of more conventional clothing'. The words used in this context γυμνός and σινδών are open to more than one interpretation. γυμνός has been taken to mean 'naked', and it could also mean wearing only a χιτών or tunic. She takes σινδών

to stress the substance of which the garment was made and thereby not to consign the youth to bed to account for his wearing a piece of linen. She observes the word συνηκολούθει and suggests that it is “grammatically compatible with his being present at the moment of the arrest and therefore at Gethsemane”.

Later she argues that ‘solitude on the Mount of Olives was likely to be difficult to find that night’. Also ‘it is difficult to make a case for there being no pilgrims near Gethsemane’. Thus she establishes the fact that it is impossible to assume that there was no historical evidence for the Prayer at Gethsemane.

Problems in considering Psalms as the generative texts of Gethsemane:

Martin Dibelius is the chief proponent of suggesting that the prayer at Gethsemane is a creation of the Christian community as they reflected the passion of Jesus in terms of the Psalms. He quotes Psalms 22.24, 31.22, 69.3 and the related cry, extreme stress and the prayer for deliverance in 22.20, 31.9,10,22, 69.1f. Dibelius develops his thesis in the following manner.

A presentation of the Passion must take account of this, and perhaps the oldest record used by Mark did so, perhaps with a lament of Jesus and with the content of His prayer, and thus, to some extent, with a description of the same content as Mark xiv, 34f. Mark built this material up into a process. A traditional word of Jesus gave him cause for this, when it exhorted watchfulness and prayer in the last days, i.e. Mark xiv, 38, originally of equal importance to Mark xiii, 35, Luke xii, 37, but differentiated from these parallels by the use made of the conceptions of flesh and spirit. Mark understood this exhortation as a warning about natural sleep and, on this account, he put together the scene of the sleeping disciples. He also put the prayer of Jesus (xiv, 36) into direct speech with an application of the metaphor of the cup of suffering which was probably already common, and with the emphasis upon what was for him the main thing, Jesus’ submission to the will of God. The whole grew, if only by suggestion, into an occurrence

by extending the prayer into three acts of prayer, and by separating off the three disciples in the way already found in the Gospel tradition (Mark v, 37; ix, 2). In this way the material gathered out of the Old Testament became a revelation of Jesus' obedience in opposition to the inert and dull disciples (Dibelius 1934:212f).

For Dibelius, the main reason for doubting the historical authenticity is lack of eyewitnesses. In fact, this assumption has been questioned and there is not sufficient evidence to rule out the possibility of any eyewitness. D.J.Moo rejects the thesis of Dibelius based on the following arguments.

Heb 5.7 demonstrates only that scriptural study was continuing (if, indeed, an allusion to Ps 31.23 is present) and does not offer material for comparison with the Gospels. If the tradition had been derived from that psalm, it is difficult to understand why Jesus' prayers, the high point of the scene, do not explicitly allude to any of the psalms. The prayer to God for deliverance from distress is a common feature of the lament psalms, but Jesus' prayers are essentially different, being petitions for salvation from a tribulation that is imminent (Moo 1983:246).

The Misunderstanding about the 'sleeping of the Disciples':

Barrett gives a strong argument against the literal meaning of the 'sleeping'. It is conceivable to see the disciples running away in a tragic situation like that of Jesus. They obviously noticed that Jesus was going through a difficult period. At least one or two of them were armed. However, it is inconceivable to see the disciples sleeping. Therefore, Barrett suggests a different way of understanding the theme of command to be awake and the theme of sleep on the side of the disciples.

The word γρηγορεῖτε means 'keep awake'. But, Barrett draws our attention to a special meaning in the New Testament, that of watching for the *parousia* of Christ,

giving the references of Mt 24.42, 25.13, Mk 13.35,37, 1 Cor 16.13, 1 Th 5.10, 1 Pt 5.8, Rv 3.2,3, 16.15, Mt 24.43, Mk 13.34 and Lk 12.37. He suggests that

It may be that the strange story in the gospels is due to misunderstanding. The evangelists mistakenly turned into a command to remain physically awake an exhortation to look out for the long-expected fulfilment of the apocalyptic hope, and went on to draw the inference that those to whom the command was addressed were falling asleep (Barrett 1967:47).

Other suggestions are made to draw out the possibility of some of the disciples hearing the prayer. It is possible that all did not go to sleep right at the beginning of the incident. Thereby at least the opening part of Jesus' prayer was heard. Stanley says that it is 'implausible that all would have simultaneously fallen asleep' (Stanley 1980:273). We have already noted that the possibility of another eyewitness itself is not ruled out.

Multiple Textual Evidence:

From a historical point of view, the presence of many textual accounts could be taken as a supporting point for the historicity of the event. In this case, we might need to take each Gospel account independently and give individual value to it. The witness of the Fourth Gospel also holds value here. The Letter to the Hebrews talks about a moment in the life of Jesus where he offered prayers and supplications with a loud cry. Therefore this also has to be taken as of independent value. Therefore, we have five different textual evidences from the canonical writings. Even though there could be some textual interdependence among them, each one of them deserves separate authenticity since they had separate existence from an early period.

The Obvious Variation of the Theme of Escape:

The pain described in the account of sweat becoming like great drops of blood in Luke, the type of agony described and the words used like ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, ἀδημονεῖν are some indications of the depth of the reality of Jesus' agony. The theme of escape was not clearly mentioned in John. However, John who consistently portrays the oneness of the Son with the Father, was not able to hide the trouble and dilemma Jesus went through. If we look at the description of the death of Stephen in Ac 7.59–60, we have no evidence of a desire for escape. John and the narrative in Acts of the Apostles reflect a glorifying tendency of the early Church regarding the idea of innocent death and martyrdom.

The Gethsemane event, on the contrary, talks nakedly about the fear and anxiety of Jesus and particularly his desire to escape without any shame or embarrassment. While we notice significant dignity and honour in the death narratives of John and Acts, how could Markan narrative encompass the shame of Jesus' desire to escape? If the Gethsemane event was a creation of the Church, one would expect a more moderate form of description in Mk 14.32–42. Therefore, we have more reason to accept the Gethsemane event as historical and not just the creation of the Church.

6.3. The Historical Accuracy of the Meaning of the Event:

C.K.Barrett puts forward two reasons why the Gethsemane event cannot be a complete invention. According to the Synoptic Gospels, this particular day was the

Passover. Therefore it is not surprising to see some of the disciples with “eschatological excitement and expectation”. Secondly, the last words of Jesus, according to Mark, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Mk 15.34) make sense ‘if Jesus had been expecting God to act in his vindication before his death, and knew now that his hope was to be disappointed’ (Barrett 1967:48). Barrett also argues that this expectation is different from and older than the view of the early church.

Barrett mentions a few questions that help us ascertain the historicity of the meaning of the event. Was it true that Jesus thought that he had to die? Did Jesus try to escape that death? It looks as if he meditated upon a means of fulfilling his purpose even without dying at that moment.

Did he up to the last moment hope that God would intervene and deliver him by inaugurating the age to come? The answer to this question is difficult. The nearest answer we can deduce is from the Gethsemane event itself, which obviously we cannot do, since that event itself is under investigation.

Did he expect to die alone, or in the company of his disciples or some of them? Even though Jesus interpreted his death in terms of the special significance attached, there are hints in the Gospel writings to consider that Jesus so keenly wanted his disciples, at least the close disciples, with him.

Barbour argues that any prayer of Jesus to save himself from death involves questioning the whole purpose and effectiveness of his ministry.

For if he did expect to die in fulfilment of that ministry, a prayer to be saved from this death must be to some extent a recantation (unless it were simply due to physical fear or some other 'psychological cause' – an unverifiable and unlikely hypothesis); and if he did not, it implies the prospect of his whole work ending in failure; if on the other hand he held more than one possibility before him, about his impending death, right till the end, a prayer to be saved from death would still imply at least an agonizing doubt whether his previous understanding had been correct (Barbour 1970:249f).

7. Conclusion

The historicity can be proved or disproved only tentatively. Considering the information we have and the information we do not have we can attempt to make our judgement on the historicity of the Gethsemane prayer. As we understand the issue of historicity in three levels and understand all are equally important, we can say with a fair amount of certainty that Jesus during his earthly life, just before his crucifixion, prayed in a place called Gethsemane that he might be saved from death.

Chapter Five

THE DOMINANT THEMES IN THE GETHSEMANE NARRATIVE

There are a few dominant themes in the Gethsemane narrative which are crucial to understanding the meaning of Jesus' prayer. We shall concentrate on two themes from Jesus' prayer itself, namely "Remove this cup from me" and "Not what I want but what you want", one from Jesus' rebuke – "Are you asleep" and one from Jesus' command to his disciples – "Keep awake and pray that you may not enter into temptation". As we go along we shall point out some parallels which are very close to those themes. We shall give special attention to the new connections and meanings which help us understand the Prayer at Gethsemane better.

A. Remove this Cup from me

The use of metaphors is common in any culture or language of any time. The word ποτήριον is one of such used in the Bible quite often. In the Septuagint (LXX), this word occurs 33 times. In the New Testament, it occurs 31 times. כוס is the word which is commonly rendered as ποτήριον in the LXX. It is also used in the extra-biblical writings. It is commonly translated in English as 'cup'. The word ποτήριον in the Prayer at Gethsemane plays a central role in the pericope. Jesus used this word on some other occasions too. Dalman supposes that Jesus must have used the Aramaic word 'kasa' (Dalman 1929:20).

In a study of the prayer at Gethsemane, it becomes crucial to understand the meaning in which Jesus used this word (Mt 26.27, Mk 14.36, Lk 22.42, Jn 18.11). Various attempts have been made to establish the meaning of the ποτήριον from the Jewish background. While this is essential, it is also important not to miss out the specific meaning in the Gospel writings as such and more specifically in the individual Gospel writings. The metaphorical sense of ‘cup’ is popular among Christians, more because of the Lord’s Supper than because of the Gethsemane Prayer. So sufficient attention has to be given to understanding the interrelation between the two usages.

1. A Brief Survey of the Metaphorical Usage of the Word ‘Cup’

The Hebrew Bible:

The metaphor ‘cup’ is predominantly used in the Psalms and the prophetic writings. The following expressions refer to something positive and good: “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup” (Ps 16.5), “my cup overflows” (Ps 23.5), “I will lift up the cup of salvation” (Ps 116.13) and “cup of consolation” (Jr 16.7).

All the other references in Psalms (11.6, 75.8), Isaiah (51.17,22), Jeremiah (25.15,17,28, 49.12, 51.7), Lamentations (4.21), Ezekiel (23.31,32,33), Habakkuk (2.16) and Zechariah (12.2) are talking about either the wrath of God or the punishment of God. Walther Eichrodt, while commenting on Ezk 23.31–34 concedes that the metaphor ‘cup’ has become “a permanent feature in metaphorical language to denote the portion in life fixed by God either of good or evil” (Eichrodt

1970:331). As J.L.McKenzie commented on Is 51.17, “it is the cup itself which is the punishment” (McKenzie 1968:123).

The Gospel According to Mark:

In the first two references in Mark, namely 7.4 and 9.41, the word itself is used in a literal sense. The second set of references is connected with the request of James and John. “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (10.38). When they replied affirmatively, Jesus said to them “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;” (10.39). Both in Matthew and in Mark, this particular pericope has got the ‘ransom’ saying in it. To some extent, it could be understood that Jesus equates ‘cup’ and ‘baptism’ to infer the same. Jesus implies that this cup could be drunk by others and others could be baptised with the baptism with which Jesus is baptised. In the pericope of the Last Supper, the word ‘cup’ in 14.23 does not necessarily refer to anything other than a literal cup. The wine in the cup is interpreted.

The ‘cup’ reference in the Gethsemane pericope “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want” (14.36) is preceded by another prayer of Jesus in indirect speech. In that prayer (14.35), Mark records that Jesus “prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him”. So, if we try to comprehend the Gospel according to Mark as a whole, we can notice similarities between the metaphors of ‘baptism’, ‘hour’ and ‘cup’. The change

of attitude or belief during the hour of prayer is not noted in Mark as it is in Matthew. It is understandable from this passage that the ‘cup’ might be the reason why Jesus ἤρξατο ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν.

E.Best believes that the ‘cup’ is “neither a metaphor for destiny or fate in general, nor for suffering and death in particular. It denotes the judgement of God” (Best 1990:153). He further writes “That God reaches out the cup of wrath to men (Ezk 23.31, Hab 2.16, Jr 25.15,17) accords with Mark’s view that the Passion of Jesus is determined by God. At 14.36 Jesus shrinks from taking this cup; this can hardly mean only that he feared physical death but implies something more terrible; he is himself the object of the wrath of God” (:153)

The Gospel According to Matthew:

Out of the 7 occurrences, 6 are in direct speech in Matthew as spoken by Jesus himself. The only exception is ‘he took a cup’ (26.27), which refers to his Last Supper. The first reference is in 10.42. “And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward”. It is very hard to think of any metaphorical usage of ‘cup’ in this verse.

The next set of references comes in the passage where the mother of James and John requests of Jesus special places for her sons. Jesus asked them “Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink” (20.22). When they said that they were able,

Jesus said to them “You will indeed drink my cup, ...” (20.23). This conversation is explicitly written only in Matthew and Mark. In the parallel passage of Mark, it is worth noting that Jesus uses one more metaphor ‘baptism’ (Mk 10.35–45). In Matthew, it is τὸ ποτήριόν ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν (in contrast to τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω in Mark). According to Arndt and Gingrich, μέλλω can have the following meanings also: to intend, to purpose, to have in mind (Arndt & Gingrich 1957).

It has a sense of divine necessity on the part of Jesus to drink the cup. From the conversation, it is easy to make out that there is some difficulty involved in drinking this cup. In his reply, Jesus expresses possession of this cup by using τὸ μὲν ποτήριόν μου. Can ‘his cup’ be drunk by others? We can deduce that it is possible for others also to drink his cup from the way Polycarp uses the phrase ‘his cup’ (MPol 14).

The next set of references comes in the paragraph denouncing the Scribes and the Pharisees. The statements “for you clean the outside of the cup” (23.25), “first clean the inside of the cup” (23.26) could be understood in terms of cleansing the inner selves of the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus shouts against hypocrisy. He talks of inner purity as the primary one.

During the Last Supper, according to Matthew, Jesus “took a cup” and then said “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit

of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (26.27–29). Literally, Jesus talks here more of 'wine' than of 'cup'. In other words, the usage of 'cup' in 26.27 is not a metaphorical one. The actual cup seems to have been referred to literally. The cup certainly interprets the context of the cup.

The last reference in Matthew is in 26.39. "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want". From the context, the following observations could be made.

- (i) The 'cup' seems to be the one which made Jesus λυπεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν.
- (ii) Jesus said: περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου because of the 'cup'.
- (iii) In the beginning, Jesus believed that it might be possible for 'His' Father to let the cup pass away from him.
- (iv) From his second prayer in 26.42, where he prays "if this cannot pass unless I drink it", we can deduce that Jesus started to believe that it was not possible for the cup to pass away from him.
- (v) From the context and the tone of this prayer and from the things that follow, it is possible to conclude that Jesus referred to his suffering and death as a 'cup' during his prayer. At this point, his words in 20.28 (at his earlier cup usage) about the giving of his life as a λύτρον for many cannot be forgotten. In other words, Jesus

understood that he had to drink ‘this cup’ ‘for many’ and this cup which he decides to drink is going to be the λύτρον for many. In that passage the cup and the ransom motif are closely associated.

The Gospel According to Luke:

Luke 11.39 “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup ...” seems to take the word literally. The next three references come in the passage about the Last Supper. “Then he took a cup ...” (22.17), “And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood’” (22.20). Using the ‘cup’ metaphor for the ‘new covenant in his blood’ is definitely an additional meaning. Vv.19a–20 are not present in some texts (including D-Bezae Cantabrigiensis). The overtone of 1 Cor 11.25 can be heard in Lk 22.20. It is difficult to conclude without doubt about the original placement of Lk 22.20 in the Lukan narrative.

In spite of all, it has to be noted that Jesus said to the disciples “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (22.15). Dalman notes the link between the four cups of the “Passover night” which were prevalent among Jews (Dalman 1929:152) and the ‘cup’ at the Last Supper.

The Gethsemane pericope has “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done” (22.42). ‘Agony’ with ‘sweat becoming like great drops of blood’ are the distinct marks of Lukan description (not found in P⁷⁵, A,

B, ... and found in \aleph^* D, Θ , ...). Verbal θέλω in Mark is replaced by nominal θέλημα in Luke.

The Gospel According to John:

John uses so many metaphors. But the 'cup' metaphor is used only once (18.11). Even though the agony of Jesus is sidelined to a great extent and the victorious march of Jesus is portrayed without any turbulence, the 'cup' metaphor has survived the Johannine scrutiny. It is just a statement said to Peter. "Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?". The possible other reference to his suffering in John is in 12.27 "Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say – 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour".

The First Epistle to the Corinthians and the Book of Revelation:

In the 10th and 11th chapters of 1 Cor, Paul refers to the cup of the Lord's Supper (10.16,21, 11.25,26,27,28). The crucial statement of Jesus "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (11.25) is very important for an understanding of the meaning of the metaphor 'cup'. If Paul received this sentence of Jesus' from the tradition, it is very important to consider this further. The metaphor 'cup' is taken to denote the new covenant.

The references in Revelation contain the meaning of anger, wrath and punishment (14.10, 16.19, 17.4, 18.6) – 'cup of his anger' (14.10), 'cup of the fury of his wrath' (16.19) and so on.

Some of the Extra-Biblical Writings:

(a) In *the Martyrdom of Polycarp*, there is a prayer just before Polycarp's death. Here is evidence to consider that the early church considered the martyrdom as sharing in the cup of Christ.

Chapter 14 of MPol attracts our attention very much due to the prayer he uttered just before his martyrdom. Some are sceptical about the words of the prayer. Ferguson allows the possibility that some of the faithful may have overheard this prayer (Ferguson 1987:142). It is very true that there are overtones of the Eucharistic prayer or other liturgical prayers in this chapter. But at the same time it is undeniable that Polycarp might have used his favourite prayers just before his death which in turn might have been already the eucharistic prayers.

Polycarp with a thankful heart blesses the Lord God Almighty saying,

I bless thee, that Thou hast granted me this day and hour, that I may share, (τοῦ λαβεῖν με) among the number of the martyrs, in the cup (ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ) of thy Christ, for the Resurrection to everlasting life, both of soul and body in the immortality of the Holy Spirit. And may I, today, be received among them before Thee, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice (θυσία), as Thou, the God who lies not and is truth, hast prepared beforehand, and shown forth, and fulfilled. [Tr.K.Lake]

There have been attempts to interpret the martyrdom of Polycarp as an eucharistic event. But this is not true to the text and the background. Polycarp's prayer to be accepted as a sacrifice by God and his prayer of thanksgiving for the privilege to share in the cup of Christ clearly give the impression that Polycarp has been portrayed as understanding his death in sacrificial terms.

Schoedel states that the reference to 'cup' in this prayer is the 'cup of martyrdom' (Schoedel 1967:70). Feldmeier feels that the martyrdom of Polycarp can be spoken of as the cup of Christ (Feldmeier 1987:181). Here, we have an example from the second century of a martyr understanding his death in terms of sacrifice. It could be argued that it is a cup of eucharistic sacrifice. If eucharist is understood as a sacrifice which is participating in the death of Christ, the sacrificial meaning persists. Polycarp blesses the Lord God for his participation in the death of Christ.

There is another question. Did Polycarp understand that sacrifice was completely performed by Jesus Christ for the sins of the world? Or did he feel that sacrifice has to continue in the lives of the martyrs and in every disciple of Christ? From his prayer it is possible to deduce that Polycarp did not think of the suffering and death of Jesus as a finite incident. Instead, it continues in the lives of martyrs. We dealt with this in detail earlier in chapter three.

(b) Just before Isaiah was sawn in sunder (*Ascension of Isaiah* 5.13), he said, "Go ye to the region of Tyre and Sidon; for for me only hath God mingled the cup" (Charles 1900: 42). Martyrdom or death is referred to as cup in the *Ascension of Isaiah* which is dated around the second century CE.

(c) In the *Testament of Abraham*, which is dated 1st–2nd century CE, Death came to Abraham and said "I am the bitter cup of death" (16.11) (Sanders 1983:892). The link between the image of 'cup' and death is so vivid here.

2. The 'Cup' Metaphor in the Gethsemane Prayer:

After this brief survey, a few dominant themes stand out. They are 'wrath', 'ransom', 'covenant' and 'death'. Did Jesus mean any one of these meanings or did he mean a combination of more than one is a question we have to answer.

The theme of wrath dominates the Hebrew Bible. It is possible to give an allegorical interpretation for something which has to be interpreted literally. For example, in *Genesis Rabba*, R.Joshua b.Levi says that the mention of four cups 'corresponds to the four cups of fury that the Holy One ... will give the nations of the world to drink' (Neusner 1985:242). In the *Sifre* of Deut 33.8, cup is related to wrath (Hammer 1986:362). R.Jose the Galilean explains the filled cup as the punishment of Israel by God (:336). *Sifre* is probably earlier than *Genesis Rabba*.

If the usage of cup by Jesus in Gethsemane is a metaphorical one to denote his death, it is worth asking whether all his earlier sayings regarding his own death carry a similar attitude towards death. In Gethsemane, Jesus is not clear whether this cup has to be drunk or not. In Gethsemane, Jesus seems to prefer not to drink the cup which is painful. Did Jesus usually choose an easy way? In what way was death more painful than any other painful experiences he underwent? Is exaggerating the pain of death another way of identifying with the concepts of human beings? Or is it the reflection of the disciples or the Gospel writers from their own perspective about death?

In the passion predictions, Jesus seems to take death as something acceptable and according to God's overall plan of salvation. He would be happy to say that he is going to give his life as a ransom for many. He also would compare himself with the son of the owner of the vineyard who was killed. He would break the bread to symbolise that he is going to be broken for a new covenant. However, in the last moment, he seems to behave differently.

Another question which is relevant at this point is about vindication. Did Jesus contemplate the vindication which the Father was going to show forth? If so, in what way is his approach different from the suffering Righteous, (for example Ps 35.22–26) where the Psalmist pleads with God to 'vindicate him in his righteousness'? How can it be reconciled with Lk 23.34 where Jesus intercedes for his enemies? And how can the understanding of the early church be comprehended in the words of 1 Pt 2.23 which suggests that Jesus made no threats? It also should be noted that in contrast to some of the instances where the vindication is in the present life itself (Dn 3.29, experiences of the Psalmist, etc.), the vindication of Jesus is in his raising from the dead.

We observe that two worlds are in contact here. The first one is known to us and to the early followers of Jesus to which Jesus limited himself. The other one is a wide world which is not known to us fully but realistically experienced by Jesus himself. So it means that Jesus was part of two worlds. It is a constant struggle to understand this mystery.

As Burton Mack discusses the temptation in Gethsemane, he mentions the two characterisations of the Righteous One in the persecution plot. They are (1) “the innocently accused Righteous One who fears falling into the hands of his persecutors and falls silent before them, vulnerable and helpless, calling upon God for his rescue” and (2) “the warrior who marches into the line of fire for a righteous cause, accosts his captors, and faces death with resolve as a martyr”. In the case of Jesus at Gethsemane, these attitudes are merged. The prayer is like the Righteous One in distress; the decision is that of a martyr. During the trial, Jesus is silent and outspoken. As he carries the cross, Jesus is portrayed both as weak and as strong. Mack goes further to say that “on the cross Jesus is both destitute (the words of desolation) and imperious (the outcry as he dies)” (Mack 1988:307). According to Mack, the cup is the cup of martyrdom; the hour is the hour of innocent suffering.

We could see Mack’s attempt to trace both the elements of the Righteous one and the martyr in the Passion of Jesus. It is a helpful analysis to be aware of different threads of traditions in the Passion Narrative. However, we do not have to extend these two categories in every stage of the Passion. For example, distinguishing the ‘cup’ from the ‘hour’ using these different categories looks far-fetched. Jesus drinks the cup as a martyr and as an innocent sufferer. It is not only true that he accepted the cup courageously as a martyr; it is also true that he had to cry aloud as a Righteous innocent that his cup might be taken away.

3. The 'Cup of Suffering' or the 'Cup of Wrath'?

We have noticed already that the usage of the metaphor 'cup' has been predominantly in a sense of wrath or punishment in the Hebrew Bible. It is necessary to mention why we cannot accept solely this understanding of this metaphor in the case of Gethsemane usage. I would like to argue that we do not have sufficient evidence to take it beyond doubt that Jesus meant the cup of punishment or cup of wrath in his prayer. The following arguments will strengthen the above point and advance the argument towards the cup of suffering or death without any connotation of punishment or wrath of God.

On the other hand, there is a question quite often asked. If Jesus did not mean wrath or punishment of God in his saying 'remove this cup from me', why should he be so much distressed? If we extend this question, we can trace the underlying difficulty of this question to accept the true humanity of Jesus. However, this does not determine the meaning of the metaphor. Therefore, let us look into the evidence.

1. Multiple meanings of the same metaphor. Meanings are attributed to the words in different times, cultures or places differently. For our specific purpose, the word 'cup' itself could be taken. In Psalms, for example, 'cup' has been used to connote more than one meaning. Ps 74.9 talks about a cup which is in the hand of the Lord and which is poured out to all the wicked of the earth. This is a cup of the wrath of God. At the same time, in Ps 115.4, we read about the 'cup of salvation'.

To give one more example from the Hebrew Bible, Jeremiah uses this metaphor in more than one sense. Jr 16.7 talks of the cup of consolation whereas Jr 32.15 talks of the ‘cup of the wine of wrath’.

In the New Testament, with the only exception of the references in the Book of Revelation, no other reference could be called connoting the cup of wrath beyond any doubt. Moreover, here also we have varied meanings of this metaphor. If we take the longer version of Lk 22 as authentic, we have a ‘cup’ which refers to the new covenant (22.20), whereas in Lk 22.42 we have a ‘cup’ which Jesus asks the Father to take away from him. Both of these cannot mean the same.

Moreover, while we have sufficient references to a ‘cup’ which is painful and unwelcome in the Gospel traditions, we also have got the ‘cup of the Lord’ (1 Cor 10.21), the ‘cup of blessing’ (1 Cor 10.16) and the cup which is the new covenant (1 Cor 11.25) in the Pauline writings. Therefore, it could be concluded that the same metaphor can be used in more than one way.

2. *The Shift of meaning.* In any language meanings are given to any particular word on the basis of need and convenience. This meaning is susceptible to change in the course of time. Therefore, based on the evidence that ποτήριον has been used in a particular way in the LXX, we cannot determine clearly the meaning of the same word in a different period – in the Gethsemane Prayer. The shift of meaning or the different usage of the same metaphor could be illustrated by the following examples.

- (a) The 'cup of thy Christ' used in the Martyrdom of Polycarp may indicate that it has been used in a sense of martyrdom or death.
- (b) Martyrdom or death is referred to as a cup in the Ascension of Isaiah which is dated around the second century CE, though part of it may be earlier.
- (c) In the Testament of Abraham 16.11, which is dated 1st–2nd century CE, death came to Abraham and said "I am the bitter cup of death".
- (d) It is very difficult to make sense if we take "This cup which is poured out for you" (Lk 22.17) in the sense of wrath or punishment.
- (e) It is impossible to make sense if we want to understand the 'cup' in 1 Cor 11.25 in the sense of wrath or punishment. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood".
- (f) R.Hiyya b.Abba (Amoraic, Palestinian, third century) uses this metaphor in the sense of death "... it continues for ever, it is a path since the creation, many have drunk this cup, and many will drink it ..." (Babylonian Talmud Ketubbot 8b).

Therefore, it is very important to take into account the shift of meanings when we consider the metaphors.

3. There is no other saying in Mark's Gospel where Jesus talks of his death as the punishment or the wrath of God. One place often quoted in this regard is Mk 10.45 and its parallel in Matthew (20.28). Büchsel points out an important matter about

λύτρον that “the ransom is primarily based on loss of freedom, not guilt. If the victor in war or the master of a slave believes the prisoner or slave is guilty in relation to him, he does not accept a ransom but gives free rein to his anger” (Büchsel 1967: 341 f.n.). There are a few instances in the LXX (e.g. Lv 25.24, Nm 3.46, 49) where λύτρον is taken to mean ‘redemption’ rather than something paid for redemption. Therefore, first of all, there is a strong doubt whether Jesus meant ‘ransom’ when he used the word which Mark translates as λύτρον. Secondly, other references in the Gospels about his death do not support the view that he understood his death as a payment. The emphasis in many passages in LXX may well be on rescue rather than on payment.

4. Jesus’ prayer at Gethsemane gives perfect meaning even without inserting the theme of punishment or wrath of God. If Jesus was overshadowed by past or future, he need not have been disturbed so much about his death to which he refers with the word ‘cup’. E.Best tries to give a solution that “this cannot be a shrinking, only from physical pain and death” (Best 1990:156). Even his own followers “faced death for his sake more courageously than that”. Best thereby concludes that “it is the cup of the wrath of God”. However, the comparison of Jesus’ courage with that of his followers is not sufficient to allow us to derive this conclusion. If we *a priori* assume that Jesus was more courageous than his followers, we are bound to commit methodological errors.

We can derive a meaning only from another fixed parameter. It is not correct to elicit a meaning from an already changing category. Therefore, we need to look at the meaning based on comparatively unchanging parameters. Contrary to his followers or other martyrs, Jesus' cup was for the cup's sake. For him, death was not a means to an end. There was no hidden motive behind his death. Probably it has to be stated that Jesus neither justified his death nor blamed anybody for his death. That was the authentic response which came naturally from his authentic personality.

5. In Mk 10.35ff, Jesus accepts the notion that James and John could drink the cup that Jesus drinks. If it is the cup of punishment or wrath, it is very difficult to think that anybody else could drink the cup of punishment or wrath. As we have noted in the example of Polycarp, here also is a place to suppose that the same cup which Jesus drank can be shared. If it is a cup of wrath, and to be exclusively drunk by Jesus himself, is it likely that Jesus told James and John that they also can drink the same cup?

6. The divine necessity of the death of Jesus which is mentioned in the Gospels is sometimes taken as evidence for the wrath of God meaning for the death of Jesus. However, should divine necessity be divine wrath? None of the passages (Mt 16.21, 26.54, Mk 8.31, Lk 9.22, 13.33, 17.25, 22.7, 37, 24.7, 26, 44, Jn 3.14, 34, 20.9) which talk about the divine necessity of Jesus' death has got any notion of the wrath or the punishment of God.

Therefore, the evidence compels us to agree on the meaning of cup of death or suffering for the Gethsemane cup. At Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father to take the cup away from him. The literary evidence proves that this cup is the cup of suffering and death. This is in complete harmony with Jesus' attitude about his death in other parts of the Gospels. It is in his complete humanity that Jesus makes this request to the Father. However, it is followed by his complete submission to his Father's will. To describe the cup of Gethsemane as a cup of punishment or a cup of wrath is without sufficient evidence and is an attempt to interpret the death of Jesus in a way other than what Jesus himself meant.

B. Not My Will But Yours Be Done

(Not What I Want, But What You Want – in Mk and Mt)

“Will of the Father” is a crucial aspect in the case of the prayer at Gethsemane. It is precisely this matter that Jesus wanted to know during his prayer. He knew the end of the prophets. He was aware of the tension between the religious authorities and himself. Just before his actual death, he undergoes the same human feelings and uncertainties as any other human being. He wanted to know whether he is doing everything according to his Father’s will.

Will of God has been understood in different writings with different terminologies in the Hebrew Scriptures. In Ps 135.6 we read “Whatever the Lord pleases he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps” and in 1 Sam 3.18 we read “It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him”.

1. The Will of God in the Lord’s Prayer and in Gethsemane:

In the Matthean version of the Lord’s Prayer, the third petition is “Your will be done”. This particular petition is not found in the Lukan version of the Lord’s Prayer. The words in Mt 6.10 – γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου are found verbatim in Mt 26.42—γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου. Mt 26.42 is Jesus’ prayer for the second time. In the first time, he says πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ’ ὡς σύ (Mt 26.39). The complete resemblance of Mt 26.42 with Mt 6.10 has caused much trouble to the exegetes. In Mk 14.36, it is rendered ἀλλ’ οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω

ἀλλὰ τί σὺ and in Lk 22.42 it is given as πλὴν μὴ τὸ θέλημά μου ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν γινέσθω.

Holleran holds the view that “Matthew and Luke have attempted here to bring Jesus’ prayer into closer alignment with the third petition of the Our Father and that Mark is more original” (Holleran 1973:30). Davies considers that Matthew has “introduced the exact words ‘thy will be done’ in the story of Gethsemane” (Davies 1988:605).

It is important to note that the phrase “your will be done” in Mt 6.10 is not found in the Lukan version of the Lord’s Prayer in Lk 11.1–4. Jeremias argues that the Luke is the older and the Matthean version is an expansion. He gives three reasons supporting this argument (Jeremias 1967:90).

1. In accordance with the growth of any liturgical texts, all the three expansions in the Matthean version are at the end of a particular section of the prayer.
2. This expanded version is stylistically consistent in Matthew. (Three ‘Thou petitions’ correspond to the three ‘We petitions.’)
3. Rather than any addition to ‘abba’, simple ‘abba’ was the common nature of Jesus’ own prayers.

Luz raises an important question about the meaning of the third petition. “Does the petition mean an action of the human being (your will be done *through* people)? Or does it mean an action of God (*you* do your will *among* the people)?” (Luz 1989:380). It seems the will of God is done in the case of after-Gethsemane

incidents through the people and among the people. Luz further writes that Jesus “asks for the strength to subordinate himself actively to this will of God”.

Brown warns that the parallels between the Lord’s Prayer and the Gethsemane prayer should not be too simply explained. He concedes that “the Lord’s Prayer in Matt and in Luke is already a *developed* early Christian prayer drawn from a formula and wording associated with Jesus himself” (Brown 1994:177).

Quoting the pattern of the Jewish prayer-book today, Daube argues that the phrase “yet not what I want but what you want” denotes the surrender in the threefold prayer at Gethsemane—acknowledgement, wish and surrender (Daube 1959:539–40). Jesus acknowledges that all things are possible with the Father. He clearly states what he wishes to happen. And finally he commits and surrenders his own desire to his Father’s desire. He maintains that Jesus “chose that hour to make the traditional declaration, accepting death in love” (:545). It is to tell others clearly that he is accepting death wholeheartedly without murmuring.

The instrumental role of the people in accomplishing the will of God is to be noted. The will of God is not something which is performed without reference to God’s people. Even though Brown emphasises the ‘developed’ nature of the Lord’s prayer by the Church, the following question is also important: Which was the original context of the phrase “your will be done”? Gethsemane or the teaching of the disciples. The distinction between Jesus’ will and his Father’s is evident. It is

important to understand the role of love in surrendering one's will to another which Daube emphasises here. Jesus accepts death in love.

Before discussing the independent accounts in the Gospels, it is necessary to state briefly how we understand the interrelationship between the Gospels.

The common materials among the Synoptic Gospels are the main reason for any explanation of the interdependence of the Gospels. The majority of scholars hold the view that Mark was the earliest Gospel and Matthew and Luke made use of Mark. A hypothetical source – Quelle (Q) was proposed to explain the enormous similarities between Matthew and Luke which are not in common with Mark.

In the earlier part of this century, it was believed that the Synoptic Problem was solved by this Two-Source theory. However, there are a few scholars who revived the so-called Griesbach hypothesis, defending the Augustinian position: Matthew was the first Gospel to be written, Mark was dependent on Matthew and Luke came later. With the writing of W.R.Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem* (1976), the Matthean priority got greater strength.

Eta Linnemann claims that a thorough statistical analysis shows that "there is no evidence that Matthew and Luke were literarily dependent on Mark". She adds that "nothing prevents the conclusion that the three Synoptics could have been written independently" (1996:8). She argues that "Q's existence cannot be corroborated from manuscript evidence, Paul's letters, or the known history of the early church. Q

and the ‘Q people’ are an historical fiction” (:7). Out of the one hundred and thirty passages (sixty-five pairs of parallels) which allegedly constitute Q, Linnemann notes “the longer the passage, the smaller the number of identical words and the bigger amount of differences”. Maintaining a view that the Q hypothesis is an unnecessary one, she suggests a high probability of Jesus’ disciples committing the sayings to memory.

Although the majority of scholars follow the theory of Markan priority due to justifiable reasons, we recognise that the issue is still under debate and therefore leave the Synoptic problem open. Now we will discuss the expression ‘will of God’ in the Gospels, Hebrews and James.

Will of God in Mark:

The suffering of Jesus and his followers has been treated extensively in Mark. The suffering of Jesus has been almost at the centre of Markan understanding of Jesus’ history. Even in pre-Markan tradition there is the motif that Jesus is dedicated to the proclamation of the Reign of God and that God’s moral will is all important. In 2.20, a time when the bridegroom would be taken away (ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι ὅταν ἀπαρθῇ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ὁ νυμφίος) has been predicted. Right from the early part of his ministry, according to Mark, the Pharisees began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus (3.6).

The hearers of Jesus' teaching took offence at him (6.3). Jesus knew that any prophet would not be honoured in his own house (6.4). The inserted story of the beheaded John the Baptist causes the reader to be astonished whether this could be the fate of any prophet (6.17–29). Even the king who had all the power in his jurisdiction was helpless to do something which he really wished to do. In other words, he had to do something he claimed he did not wish to do. Against Herod's own intention, John the Baptist had to be beheaded.

The link between miracle and the will of God and miracle as a response to prayer are very evident in 1.40–45. The dramatic “ἐὰν θέλῃς” of the leper and “θέλω” of Jesus are put one against another as if it is to explain this fact. Dowd argues that “the miracle traditions and the prayer teaching of 11.22–25 taken together show that, for the evangelist, an important aspect of the will of God is God's intervention on behalf of the community in response to petitionary prayer” (Dowd 1988:136).

For Dowd, God's will is closely linked with the community's circumstances. If God's will is susceptible to change based on the community's prayer, it could be that even in the context of Gethsemane, the will of God was not fixed and it could be changed based on the need of Jesus. Probably, that is why, the will of God seems a flexible one in Gethsemane.

While discussing the question of discipleship in Mark, Donahue writes “The summons of Jesus in 1.15 is to believe in the Gospel and 3.35 states the fundamental condition of that belief, doing the will of God” (Donahue 1982:585). He concludes

that “Jesus does not know the secrets of the Father (13.32) and stands in obedience to his will (14.36)” (:593). The disciples are not those who just suffer, but those who do the will of God.

When we look at the first passion prediction, we see the inevitability of the suffering of the Son of Man (δεῖ). Dowd rightly notes the change of imperative into indicative when Mark quotes Zch 13.7b in Mk 14.27. The phrase ‘Strike the shepherd’ has been changed to ‘I will strike the shepherd’. She claims that this is to emphasise the prophet’s point that “both the striking of the ‘shepherd’ and the scattering of the ‘sheep’ are God’s doing” (Dowd 1988:134).

Drinking the cup and being baptised (10.39), according to Jesus, are essential elements to enter into glory. The passion prediction in 8.31 δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ... ἀποκτανθῆναι ... ἀναστῆναι gives a clear picture about how Jesus had understood his calling and his future. Some other scholars think it a prophecy after the event.

In the Markan description of Jesus’ life it is well known that John the Baptist’s description is very important. The ‘written-ness’ (γέγραπται), which is a recurring feature of Matthew and the ‘must-ness’ (δεῖ) come together in that description (9.12,13). There seems no provision for alternatives. It is worth noting that in the Hebrew Scriptures, a personal address is used where Greek would have δεῖ (Grundmann 1964:22).

There are some scholars who think that the passion predictions could be interpreted as reflecting the knowledge of death & resurrection of Jesus and therefore they originate from a post-resurrection Christian community. If we eliminate all the sayings which are supposedly post-resurrection constructions of the early church, a conclusion like Bultmann's – we cannot know anything about how Jesus regarded his death – is unavoidable. Bultmann claimed that a few Son of Man sayings which distinguished Jesus from a special Son of Man figure were spoken by Jesus (1963). According to N.Perrin and P.Vielhauer “none of the Son of Man sayings goes back to Jesus” (cf. Collins 1987:392). Summarising their discussion, Collins writes

The tradition rather originated as one attempt to make sense of the death and vindication of Jesus. According to Vielhauer, the designation of Jesus as Son of Man was the earliest Christology, which arose in connection with the experience of Easter (:392f).

Howard's classification is helpful at this point (Howard 1977:518). There are three groups of sayings which relate to the passion and resurrection of Jesus. They are: (1) The ‘open’ passion and resurrection predictions⁷. (2) The sayings which attach salvific significance to Jesus' death⁸. (3) The so-called ‘veiled’ passion predictions⁹.

Based on the course of Jesus' ministry and his view of salvation history, Jeremias argues that Jesus could not have expected a better fate than the prophets (1971:276–86). He further argues that Mk 9.31 is the earliest of the passion predictions and the

⁷ Mk 8.31 par Mt 16.21 and Lk 9.22 (cf. 17.25), Mk 9.31 par Mt 17.22-23 and Lk 9.44, Mk 10.33-34 par Mt 20.18-19 and Lk 18.31-33, Mk 9.12 par Mt 17.12, Mk 14.3-9 par Mt 26.6-13, Mk 14.21 par Mt 26.24 and Lk 22.22, Mk 14.27 par Mt 26.31, Mk 14.41 par Mt 26.45 (cf. 22.48), Lk 24.7, Mt 12.40, 26.2 and 26.54.

⁸ Mk 14.22-24 par Mt 26.26-28, Lk 22.19-20 and Mk 10.45 (cf. Lk 22.28).

⁹ Lk 11.29-32 par Mt 12.39-41, Lk 13.31-33, Lk 13.34-35 par Mt 23.37-39, Mk 2.18-20 par Mt 9.14-15 and Lk 5.33-35, Mk 10.38-39 par Mt 20.22, Mk 12.1-11 par Mt 21.33-43 and Lk 20.9-18.

other two are variations from the first one. He claims that “the announcements themselves ... protest against a wholesale devaluation of their reliability” (:281).

Knox argues, however, against the plausibility of a sane person thinking about his own end in this manner. He argues the view

that he knew he must be put to death in order to fulfil his vocation, that he “interpreted his destiny as that of the suffering redeemer, as the representative of the many whose supreme need is reconciliation to God”. Such an understanding of his destiny is compatible with the theology – and the psychology – of the Church. But is it compatible with the mental health of the man Jesus? (Knox 1959:76)

Maurice Casey argues that the alleged sayings of Jesus have to be translated back into Aramaic which was the original language of Jesus. If the phrase concerned does not make sense in Aramaic, then it is possibly not the saying of Jesus. He is confident that he could reconstruct the underlying Aramaic in every saying and for which, according to Brown (1994:508 f.n.), “he depends on post-1st-cent. targums”. Casey argues that it is possible that Jesus predicted of his suffering and death and later the early Christians added a reference to ‘the Son of Man’ into it.

Defending the general authenticity of Mk 8.31, Casey continues

Jesus’ rebuke of Peter has no satisfactory *Sitz im Leben* in the early church, but it makes excellent sense as it stands. Peter’s attempt to dissuade Jesus from martyrdom is as natural as it is clear, and could follow only from a prediction of his death. In Mark as it stands, the impression is given that the prediction was immediately comprehensible (Casey 1987:43).

Casey’s argument is convincing here. In another place, he argues for three different groups of writings: a core of genuine sayings conforming to Aramaic idiom, a

secondary group influenced by Dn 7.13 and a penumbra of sayings which develop further the church's known concerns with the death and parousia of Jesus (1991b: 43).

Lindars rightly argues that "the presence of the Aramaic idiom does not *prove* authenticity, but adds weight to the *possibility* of authenticity in each case" (Lindars 1985:40).

Another question we need to answer in this context is the number of passion predictions. Did Jesus predict three times or just once? Some scholars argue that Jesus said this only once and later on the early church made it three.

It needs to be noted that three instances of predictions are very few considering the antagonistic encounters Jesus had in his life. Jesus having known the fate of the prophets from a Jewish background, and being aware of the stories of Jewish and Hellenistic martyrs could not have been so completely naïve as to imagine that his life would end smoothly. It is possible that Jesus reflected on his life comparing the figures in the Hebrew Bible. Since there are close parallels with the Hebrew Scriptures, the authenticity of a passage or saying need not be rejected. If the early church was able to reflect the events in Jesus' life in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures, might not Jesus himself have made the same scriptural reflections?

To summarise the preceding discussion, there are mainly two sides to the argument. One school of scholars argue that the passion predictions are genuine sayings of

Jesus and therefore they reflect Jesus' understanding of his calling and future. Another group of scholars argue that the passion predictions are compositions of the church and they reflect the understanding of the early church about Jesus. In both cases we could trace a core of historical truth.

From the foregoing discussion, we could say that the will of God for Jesus was not a fixed fate which cannot be changed. Rather, it was a dialectic conversation between him and God, his eternal Father. It is fixed to some extent and at the same time open to his own human aspirations. It could be identified only through the close contact with that unseen being whom he personally related as his Father. His uncertainty about the whole issue was related to this question of the will of God.

Will of God in Matthew:

The words *γέγραπται* and *πληρωθῇ* are special terminologies in Matthew. The theme of the will of God in Matthew's version is further elaborated in 26.54. What is written is supposed to be fulfilled. Jesus' life has got a running commentary of what is written and what is fulfilled in Matthew (*γέγραπται* – 4.4,6,7,10, 11.10, 21.13, 26.24,31 and *πληρωθῇ* - 1.22, 2.15,17,23, 3.15, 4.14, 5.17, 8.17, 12.17, 13.35, 21.4, 26.54,56, 27.9). Bennett argues that *δεῖ* and *γέγραπται* "indicate a certain determinism concerning the 'rejection' and 'great suffering'" (Bennett 1975:118).

However, determinism is not necessarily the point here. It is more complex than that. It is an active dialectic result which emerges out of the situation. Jesus had an

open mind about the requirements of the will of God. Nevertheless, Mt 16.21 and parallels have got both these words together. These words go all through the Gospel in a uniform manner. Therefore we have to conclude that at least in the mind of the author, this has got a plan and purpose.

Jesus' question in 26.54 "How then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" is special to Matthew. This comes with the question "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" Very evidently, Jesus submits himself to the fulfilment of the scriptures.

Will of God in Luke:

For Luke, the purpose or the plan of God is very important both in the Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles. Squires concedes that even in the oracle of Simeon (2.33–34) the divine necessity is alluded to (Squires 1993:167). In 2.49, the wording is very precise: ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με; He refers to an inner compulsion or sense of recognition about his function. In 4.43, Jesus says that he must preach (δεῖ) the good news of the kingdom of God. Moreover, in the same verse he mentions in a passive voice about his purpose too (ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἀπεστάλην).

The saying in 12.50 is of paramount importance in this context. Βάπτισμα δὲ ἔχω βαπτισθῆναι, καὶ πῶς συνέχομαι ἕως ὅτου τελεσθῇ. The

definiteness about the 'baptism' has been clear in his mind and he says he is under compulsion until it is accomplished.

In 13.32 Jesus says that he has to finish (τελειοῦμαι) and in 13.33, Jesus says that he must (δεῖ) go on his way and "it is impossible (οὐκ ἐνδέχεται) for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem". There is a determined path the Son of Man trod (22.22 ὁρισμένον).

Luke recollects an occasion when he and the people begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem due to the prophecy which predicted Paul's suffering in Jerusalem. Paul was courageous saying "I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus". Finally, when he would not be persuaded, they ceased and said "The Lord's will be done" (Ac 21.13f).

On the whole, Luke has a strong emphasis on the necessity of the will of God. 'Must-ness' is important not only for suffering and death, but also for every fulfilment of God's purposes.

Will of God in John:

According to John, Jesus makes it clear that he came to do the will of the one who sent him (4.34, 5.30, 6.38). Jesus says "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to complete his work" (4.34) and "I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (5.30). Further in the sixth chapter we read

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day (6.38–40).

Brown holds that “let your will be done” of the Synoptic Gospels is equivalent to “Father, glorify your name” in John 12.28. It is important to note that in the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus, he mentions that “I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do” (17.4). The Fourth Gospel here takes up and elaborates on a motif which has its roots in the Synoptic tradition.

Will of God in Hebrews and James:

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews quotes Ps 40.7–9 with minor modifications (10.5b–7). The LXX form of τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, ὁ θεός μου, ἐβουλήθη has been shortened and rearranged to τοῦ ποιῆσαι ὁ θεὸς τὸ θέλημά σου in Hebrews. Attridge maintains that “the major alteration at this point, the omission of the final verb, effects a closer connection between the speaker’s coming and the expressed intent to do God’s will” (Attridge 1989:274). It should be noted that the last section of Ps 40.8 ‘your law is within my heart’ is not added in this quotation.

In the Psalm, the will of God is described as residing in the law of God. The psalmist distinguishes clearly the traditional sacrifices from that of his own offering of willing service. Attridge maintains that the image of ‘hollowing out the ears’, which is in Psalm 40 and changed to ‘body’ image in Hebrews, “suggests the willing obedience

that stands ready to hear and execute God's command" (:274). He further mentions that "Christ's conformity to the divine will is clearly an act that involves his body".

James uses this expression during his advice to the merchants (ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ – James 4.15). The Graeco-Roman origin of this expression has been illustrated by Dibelius and others (Dibelius 1976:233f). Adamson maintains that "in the earlier stages of Roman religion when nothing was done without first consulting the gods it had real meaning" (Adamson 1976:180f). It is striking and somewhat surprising that this motif has so definite a Graeco-Roman background. Yet the emphasis on the will of God in the Gospels could hardly be wholly assigned to such a background.

2. The Will of God in the Extra-Biblical writings:

Epictetus says "I account God's will better than my own" (Epict. 4.7.20). Socrates says "Well, if so it is pleasing to the gods, so let it be" (Plato, *Crito*, 43D). Socrates says to Alcibiades 'if it be your wish' is not well said and it should be said as ὅτι ἐὰν θεὸς ἐθέλῃ (Plato, *Alcibiades* 1.135D).

Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Koeniglichen Museen zu Berlin has got a few instances in epistolary forms where the will of God is mentioned. 1.27.11 'as God has willed' (ὁ θεὸς ἤθελεν), 1.248.11f 'if the gods will' (θεῶν δεβουλομένων), 2.423.18 'if the gods will' (τῶν θε[ῶ]ν θελόντων), 2.451.10f

‘if the gods permit’ (θεῶν ἐπιτρεπόν[τ]ων), 2.615.4 ‘if the gods will’ (θεῶν θελόντων).

Rabbi Eliezer prays “Do thy will in heaven above and give quietness of spirit to them that fear thee in the earth, and do that which is good in thine eyes” (*Tract. Berak.* 3.7). We have another Rabbinic saying in *Pirke Aboth* 2.4 “make God’s will as thy will that he may make thy will as his will; Efface thy will before his will that he may efface the wills of others before thy will”. Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai prayed “May it be (God’s) will that the fear of heaven shall be upon you like the fear of flesh and blood” (*Berak.*28b).

These are only few examples of the pre-eminence of the divine will in Graeco-Roman and Jewish writings. The consideration of the will of God is also important in Egyptian and Asian religions.

3. The Will of God in the prayers of Eleazar and Polycarp:

As we have been trying to see the resemblance of Jesus’ prayer with that of Eleazar and Polycarp, there is much to note in terms of the will of God.

In the case of Eleazar, he addresses Antiochus that “there is no compulsion more powerful than our obedience to the Law” (4 Macc 5.16). Further he says that the Law “teaches us self-control, so that we master all pleasures and desires, and it also trains us in courage, so that we endure any suffering willingly” (5.23). Obedience to the Law dominates the whole scene and the whole process is done willingly. There

is no explicit reference to the will of God. However, it is to be noted that the Law was considered to be the revelation of the will of God.

When he prays just before his death in 4 Macc 6.27, he uses the following words. “You know, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I am dying in burning torments for the sake of the law”. Here the distinction between what Eleazar might have done with the power and ability he had and what he chose to do willingly *for the sake of* the law is very clear. One powerful factor which possibly influenced and directed his act was the emphasis he put on the Law.

There is a subtle difference between Jesus’ prayer and Eleazar’s prayer at this point. Eleazar was very clear what the Law demanded of him. At least he seemed to know very clearly. That is why he was able to challenge others and to convince himself for the courageous act of death. But, in the case of Jesus’ prayer, Jesus was not sure of what the will of God demanded of him. That is why, Jesus seems to leave everything open before taking any decision. The surprising thing in his case is that he seems to carry on this doubt right up to the cross in the cry of dereliction.

Many would agree that the cry of dereliction reflects the acute sense of disappointment. Jesus did not claim to know that he has understood the will of God decisively at Gethsemane. Yet his actions after Gethsemane imply that he was clear. However, the overt shout at the cross lead us into a great doubt again. Was he clear or not? Why did he feel that he was forsaken? Here we have an instance of a continuous uncertainty even after the temporary clarity at Gethsemane.

In the Martyrdom of Polycarp, we read “And he might have departed to another place but would not, saying ‘the will of God be done’” (MPol 7.1). The similarity between Eleazar’s prayer and Polycarp’s prayer is tremendous. Polycarp also was given the possibility to escape. He decided not to escape and to allow the will of God be done. We see his underlying clarity about the will of God.

It is true that Jesus also went out of Gethsemane courageously and faced his death with unwavering fortitude. But at the time of his prayer, the assurance about the will of God seems to be lacking in the case of Jesus.

If we try to look a little more closely and try to find the reason for this startling difference, we could trace one thing. Eleazar found his whole comfort in the Law and put his trust in the Law and died for the Law. Polycarp found the reason for his whole life in Christ and put his trust in Christ and died for Christ. If we try to expand the reason for Jesus himself, there is a significant difference. Of course, it is conceivable that Jesus had a purpose and ultimate meaning for his own life. However, the fact that he took each moment as it came and faced it then and there cannot be denied. Probably this put him in a unique place that he faced his life and his death as they came without any ulterior motives.

That is to say, Jesus did not die for the sake of someone else from whom he needed favour. Death came to him as a result of the kind of life he lived. Now, what does it mean to say “according to God’s will”? Does it mean that I have tried my best to escape within my ethical framework and at last I accept whatever is left? We take

here into consideration the power of the human being to convince others and the inability of human beings to overstep the ethical line they have drawn in terms of society's ethical standards.

Some might argue that the motif in Mark is to avoid unnecessary martyrdom in early Christianity. Barrett has argued that in early Christian theology the death of Jesus was seen as an inescapable part of the divine plan. Therefore, he suggests strongly that the hesitation at Gethsemane is historical (Barrett 1967:37). In some places of Mark (8.31), he maintains that Jesus' death was not just because of the confrontation with the Jewish officials but was determined by divine necessity. It was to clarify this divine necessity, Jesus prayed that the removal of the cup should be not according to his will but according to his Father's will.

4. The Meaning of the Phrase:

Schrenk argues that while *θέλειν* signifies the 'impulsive and unconscious desire', *βούλεσθαι* denotes a 'rational and conscious' one (Schrenk 1964:629). But Bauer questions the distinction. It is Jesus' prayer that his Father's will be done. On the superficial and rational level, the death and suffering might look unimpressive, but Jesus' prayer that God's will be done is to be understood at a deeper level.

Lohmeyer suggests that there are two wills in question – Jesus' personal will and God's eschatological will. He argues that too little notice is given to the "fact that the words 'Not what I will, but what thou wilt' (Mark 14.36), occur only in this one

place in the Bible, that they are spoken at a time and in a situation in which not only Jesus' own personal fate is at stake but also the eschatological event between heaven and earth in which God is now beginning to achieve his eschatological will" (Lohmeyer 1965:123). He further refers to the point that the opposition of the human and the divine wills is a feature neither of the Hebrew scriptures nor of the New Testament.

Jesus in his prayer clearly seems to distinguish what is his will from what is his Father's will. Holleran, while discussing the Lukan version, suggests that the contrast here is "between the resolute, predetermined and immutable counsel of God and the natural inclination of the human will of Jesus" (Holleran 1973:89). He argues considering the linguistic means that Luke alone has made very clear "that the struggle of Jesus in prayer is not simply to align his will with that of the Father (v.42b), but rather to grasp whether the drinking of this cup of rejection, suffering and death is genuinely the design (ἐὶ βούλει) of God for him and for his mission".

A.Y.Collins notes the silence of God at Gethsemane in contradistinction to Jonah's prayer (Jnh 4.9). "God initiates the dialogue with Jonah and both parties speak. In the Gospel story, Jesus initiates the dialogue, but God does not respond" (Collins 1994:491). In the case of Jonah, Jonah as an agent of God receives the direction about the divine plan. Jesus, as the agent of God to fulfil His purposes, receives directions. Collins argues that the personal God of the prophets has receded from the scene and Jesus is left with a God who is 'fate-like'.

It is true that the personal God of the prophets has left Jesus to some extent. However, Jesus was not left at the hands of a 'fate-like' God. The God who accompanies Jesus was a dynamic God who is able to change his will according to the needs and prayers of his people. Any decision is taken after considering all the options.

Does this prayer suggest that there is a distinction between human will and divine will? If that is so, is the human will to be surrendered to the divine will? This question which has been tackled by countless numbers of philosophers and theologians needs to be considered even in our study.

Lofthouse in the early part of this century, wrote that the more man's will "is exercised under Divine control, the more it becomes God's will in man, and the more it becomes man's own will, acting at last in complete freedom" (Lofthouse 1918:680). The clear distinction between God's will and man's will has been maintained by many scholars despite the difficulties involved. Recently, Ayo raised a question in his study of Jesus' prayer – "In some way does the prayer of Jesus include both the transcendent will of the Father and the human will of Jesus brought into harmony?" (Ayo 1992:45). Terms like surrender, submission, obedience and harmony are very commonly used. Lohmeyer maintains that the word 'surrender' is virtually a pre-Christian term (Lohmeyer 1965:124) .

Even though the word ‘surrender’ was used before the Christian era, it is a strong consideration in the life of Jesus too. Did Jesus exactly surrender his will to his Father’s will? Or did he sacrifice his will?

Bultmann tends to think of the will of God in terms of complete obedience and the surrender of one’s own claim (Bultmann 1934:129). T.W. Manson also talks of the ‘total submission of will to will’ (Manson 1955–56:441). Scott notices that in contradistinction to the Jewish understanding of identifying the will of God with the Law, Jesus thought of it “as the sovereign wisdom and justice and goodness by which all things are governed” (Scott 1952:96). It is just this independence of judgement which marks out the prophetic character of Jesus’ concept of the will of God.

Ruprecht takes a different approach and speaks of a situation where human wills “are transformed, if not eliminated, by God’s” (Ruprecht 1992:4). Francis Martin writes “There was a moment when Jesus Christ made a decision to embrace what he clearly perceived to be the will of God, his Father, for him” (Martin 1988:588). He tends to imply that it is Jesus’ own perception of what his Father wants of him which is envisaged here rather than any kind of special revelation to him. He further says that “his obedience reveals something of the selflessness of the relation between the Father and the *Son*”(:589).

Sauter refers to the “wholly unassuming consent of the will of God” in his article *Jesus the Christ*. He says “It appeared to challenge the natural order of relationship

to God, as well as the strict distinction between God and man that regulated all religious and political life. Jesus' condemnation and death are then, in terms of the totality of the New Testament picture, quite objectively an expression of opposition to the unity of Jesus with God" (Sauter 1984:7).

Feldmeier argues that the mention of $\text{O}\tilde{\upsilon}$ instead of $\mu\eta$ in the prayer is very important (Feldmeier 1987:243). "Not my will but yours be done" is not a wish or purpose, rather it is the necessary setting of the prayer. It is an indicative statement. Therefore, Jesus acknowledging that the will of God will be done, prays to the Father to take the cup away. Further, he argues that this prayer indicates that Jesus respects the sovereignty of God and still enjoys the freedom available in his personal relationship with God as his Father. In this personal relationship, the salvation plan or the divine 'must-ness' or even the 'written-ness' is not a limit for God. The Father can go beyond what was written and do what is most relevant. This provides the opportunity for Jesus to pray 'remove this cup from me'.

Sobrino makes a strong argument about the understanding of the will of God (Sobrino 1993:220f). It has been understood that Jesus died "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Ac 2.23, 4.28) and the cross was "necessary" (Lk 24.26). Sobrino writes,

The appeal to God, in the last resort, to find a meaning for the cross at least in God, shows on the one hand the despair of human beings of finding this meaning for themselves, which is a sign of honesty in the face of what in itself is only tragedy and scandal. And it shows, on the other hand, the obstinacy of these human beings in maintaining that there must be some meaning, in other words, that history is not absurd, that hope continues to be a possibility. They locate this meaning in God.

While admitting the positive side of referring the meaning of the cross to God that there is hope drawn from faith (and not from knowledge) that absurdity is not the end of history, Sobrino does not fail to indicate an element of danger involved. He says that it is dangerous “to claim to know that and how, in God, Jesus’ cross becomes something logical and even necessary” (Sobrino 1993:221). He brings in a point that if it were the case, the cross would not reveal anything about God. Rather, “God, understood in advance, is what would make it possible to explain the cross, but then the cross would tell us nothing about God”. This is an important aspect to be kept in mind.

The will of God which had been used in the Graeco-Roman world is different from the ‘will’ Jesus refers to in prayer. In the case of Jesus, the will of God has become the will of the Father. Feldmeier is right to point out that there is freedom within the Father-Son relationship. Moreover, the ‘written-ness’ and the ‘must-ness’ in a general sense has become something which is willed by his own father. So, in that sense, Jesus had the privilege of praying in such a manner.

5. Jesus’ attitude towards death:

One might ask whether it is possible to find out Jesus’ attitude towards death at all. First of all, we need to admit that the literary traditions are the only evidences that we have got to ascertain any fact about Jesus. How much of these traditions is influenced by the authors’ viewpoints is an open question.

Is the attitude of Jesus towards death reflected in the Gethsemane narrative? Premature death was something Jesus was afraid of. It was something from which Jesus wanted to escape. It was something which Jesus accepted as his Father's will over against his own will.

To understand Jesus' attitude about his death, we need to understand how he took others' death as well. When he went into the house of Jairus, he said, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." τὸ παιδίον οὐκ ἀπέθανεν ἀλλὰ καθεύδει (Mk 5.39). The death of a child was sleep in the sight of Jesus. Jesus refers to the death of Lazarus as a sleep. Jn 11.11 Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν κεκοίμηται: ἀλλὰ πορεύομαι ἵνα ἐξυπνίσω αὐτόν. But here there is no contrast between death and sleep.

The phrase γεύσωνται θανάτου is found in Mt 16.28, Mk 9.1 and Lk 9.27. In other cases, the word 'taste' is used with dinner (Lk 14.24), wine (Mt 27.34) or water (Jn 2.9). Apart from Lk 14.24 where Jesus uses this word in a parable, the two other references are by the Gospel writers. The combination of the word 'death' with 'taste' is a significant one. In Mt 16.28, Mk 9.1 and Lk 9.27 Jesus is the one who speaks. It is possible to take this passage as a clue to understanding Jesus' attitude about others' death. Later on, this combination is picked up and used by the author of Hebrews in Heb 2.9.

A still further important point is about the death of John and Jesus' reaction to it. It is only Matthew who connects the news about the death of John and Jesus'

withdrawal to a deserted place (Mt 14.13). According to Matthew, “when Jesus heard this [the news about the death of John], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself”. Therefore, in Matthew’s viewpoint, Jesus was disturbed by the death of John. The retreat is visible in Mark also (cf. 6.31 and 6.45) and yet not as clear as Matthew.

While trying to assess the attitude of Jesus towards his death, we have to look into the passion predictions also. Passion predictions could be evidences of Jesus’ certainty about the consequence of his life which is so much in line with any other prophet. The parable of the vineyard also reflects Jesus’ anticipation about the sort of end his life would have.

Therefore, the ultimate paradox to be looked into is as follows. Jesus was disturbed by the thought of an early death and at the same time he anticipated his death if he continued his mission accumulating the fury of the religious and political leaders. The related question here is whether Jesus’ attitude about death was compatible with the wise men of that period. We have the tradition of the Maccabean martyrs, Greek heroes and other religious traditions where death is taken in one specific way or other. We have pointed out how Isaac had spoken at the point of death, how Socrates had taken his death and the words of Eleazar just before his death. In general, to a large extent, Jesus’ attitude was quite different from the other three.

The link between the age of the person and his attitude towards his death is important to us. With the exception of Isaac, all the other three were advanced in years as they

went through their ordeals. Jesus was about thirty three when he struggled at Gethsemane.

Jesus' prayer was earnestly directed towards finding out exactly what was required of him. This kind of searching was done on the specific occasions when he was not certain of the things he was supposed to do or to undergo. His prayer reflects this uncertainty from which he wants to be delivered for that occasion. In this way, this is different from the other people's prayers just before death which we have examined.

The will of God has been an important consideration to Jesus in understanding his own death. However, to be sure of what the will of God requires him to do is a main question here. While Eleazar seems to be very sure of this, Jesus struggles in agony to get this clarity. This has not been brought to the forefront in the case of Isaac and Socrates.

C. Are You Asleep?

Gethsemane is an ideal place to see the faithfulness of Jesus over against the unfaithfulness of the disciples. It is the presence of the disciples which makes the commitment of Jesus prominently visible. The question has been raised whether the presence and the interaction of the disciples is a creation of Mark. In a way, this question has been raised to some extent in Chapter Three "The Historicity of the Prayer". But it deserves extensive treatment here.

From the beginning to the end, the disciples play a significant role in the Gospels in addition to the crowd, the religious and the political authorities. However, the emphasis is different among the Gospels and different places within the same Gospel and it has to be examined very closely to understand the historical core behind the Gospels with regard to the disciples. In some places, the disciples have been shown having a positive role and there are other places where we see disciples playing a negative role.

1. The Disciples:

Jesus called the disciples to follow him and to become fishers of men. He called to him those whom he desired (Mk 3.13) and he appointed twelve to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. It is true they were sent to do mission and they did well. However, Jesus predicted that they would leave him at one point. Betrayal and denial by his own disciples seem to be an essential

reality to be experienced later by Jesus. L.Schenke draws our attention to God's knowledge and plan behind the fate of death and the failure of the disciples (Mk 14.27) (Schenke 1988:85).

C.D.Marshall notes that more than that of the ruling authorities, the characterisation of the disciples is more intricately developed in Mark. The disciples "appear as Jesus' companions, confidants, and co-workers, and yet the longer they are with Jesus, the more pronounced becomes their failure in each of these areas" (Marshall 1989:209). R.J.Raja argues that the relationship of Jesus to his disciples is quite different from the usual rabbinic phenomenon. He says "What is specific in the relationship of Jesus to his disciples is the self-understanding Jesus had which he exhibits in his relationship to them" (Raja 1992:512). But it is just this motif of Jesus' self-understanding which has been much debated. Its specific character is not easy to determine.

2. The Portrayal of the Disciples in Mark:

There is not much agreement among scholars with regard to the portrayal of the disciples. To mention just two extremes, T.Weeden (1968) takes a view where the disciples are similar to the opponents of Jesus and R.Tannehill (1977) takes a totally positive view about the disciples.

E.Best argues that the disciples generally comprise the whole community. He further concedes that

In so far as the disciples appear in a bad light it is because Mark wishes to use them as a foil: their failure to understand is sometimes introduced in order to allow Jesus to give further and fuller instruction; their fearfulness is brought out in order that Jesus may show them the sources of calm and courage; their desire for positions of importance is stressed in order that Jesus may teach them about the meaning of service. Any apparent attack on them normally ends, not in the negative side of their failure, but in positive teaching on the part of Jesus which will assist Mark's community (Best 1986:128f).

Elizabeth S. Malbon (1986:123) argues that "the disciples are equivalent to neither Mark's supposed opponents nor Mark's imagined hearers/readers". It has to be noted that all through the Gospels, we read both positive and negative pictures about the disciples. It cannot be denied that in Gethsemane, they are portrayed in a significantly negative manner. They sleep when their master is grieved unto death. Their eyes are heavy when Jesus' soul is sorrowful. We have a story here of the disciples failing to obey a specific command from Jesus.

C.C. Black in his elaborate work on Markan redaction criticism considers the disciples in Mark and summarises the varied positions of Robert Meye, Ernest Best and Theodore Weeden (Black 1989). For Meye, the disciples progressively advance in their understanding in Mark. According to Best, the disciples fail to understand. Weeden considers that the disciples progressively deteriorate in their understanding.

In spite of following the same methodology of redaction criticism, Black wonders how different scholars were able to conclude differently. He attributes these dissimilar conclusions to the same faulty methodology which allows the questioner to make use of his or her own position in deriving the conclusions. He claims that Meye emphasises the disciples' merits without considering much of their blemishes

and Weeden overemphasises the vices at the cost of their virtues (Black 1989:251). Black, however, settles for Best's mediate position which views disciples both positively and negatively. He adds an important note that this conclusion does not need a redaction critical method; rather a 'close reading' of the text with its 'surface subtleties' is enough.

3. Narrative resemblances between Mk 14.32–42 and Mk 13.33–37:

The Doorkeeper parable in the thirteenth chapter of Mark has got many striking similarities to the Gethsemane pericope. First of all, let us look at the linguistic connections. βλέπετε, ἀργυπνεῖτε of 13.33 has got a variant reading in many mss which read καὶ προσεύχεσθε in addition. The first command of Jesus “γρηγορεῖτε” in 14.34 is expanded when he commands the disciples a second time in 14.38 “γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε”. We cannot avoid noticing the threefold use of the word γρηγορέω in both passages. 13.34 γρηγορή, 13.35 γρηγορεῖτε and 13.37 γρηγορεῖτε. In the same way, 14.34 γρηγορεῖτε, 14.37 γρηγορήσαι; and 14.38 γρηγορεῖτε.

The combination of ἐλθὼν, εὔρη and καθεύδοντας seems to be very important in the parable. Mark uses in 14.37 the same words ἔρχεται, εὕρισκει and καθεύδοντας. Again, in 14.39 the same combination is used – ἐλθὼν, εὔρεν and καθεύδοντας.

The Gethsemane pericope and the Doorkeeper parable are the only places where the word γρηγορέω appears. T.J.Geddert argues that “Mark intended the Doorkeeper parable to be correlated with the Passion account” (Geddert 1989:91). He gives four evidences to that effect.

1. No other texts in Mark can be paralleled so closely with either of these texts as these can with each other.
2. ‘Watching’ (i.e., γρηγορέω) is not only restricted in Mark to these two texts, but is the keynote in both.
3. The threefold failure in Gethsemane to watch (14.37,40,41) is a fitting counterpart to the threefold injunction to do so (13.34,35,37).
4. ‘Sleeping in crisis’ is a vice rather than virtue in both these texts but not elsewhere in Mark (4.38 and 4.27).

However, while taking the resemblance very seriously, we cannot deny the fact that these two passages seem to belong to two different contexts. Did Mark intend to interpret the Gethsemane incident with an eschatological meaning which is the original context of chapter 13? In other words, did he consider the passion of Jesus as an end-time event?

Lawrence draws our attention to two elements which appear in the Gethsemane narrative which are not alluded to in Mk 13.33–37 namely prayer and ‘moral struggle’ (Lawrence 1994:211). Prayer is connected with the command to be awake on other occasions like Lk 21.36 (ἀγρυπνεῖτε), Eph 6.18 (ἀγρυπνοῦντες) and Col 4.2–3 (γρηγοροῦντες). The command to be awake and temptation are connected in passages like Rm 13.11–14 (ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι), 1 Cor 16.13

(γρηγορεῖτε), Eph 6.10–18 (ἀργυπνοῦντες), 1 Th 5.4–8 (γρηγορῶμεν), 1 Pt 5.8–9 (γρηγορήσατε), Rv 3.3–4 (γρηγορήσης) and Rv 16.15 (γρηγορῶν). Therefore, Lawrence would like to infer that Mark seeks connections with wider traditions (e.g. hortatory tradition) rather than just with Mk 13.33–37.

4. The metaphor of sleep:

‘Sleep’ is used as a metaphor for death in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament quite commonly. e.g. 1 Ki 1.21, Jr 51.39, Dn 12.2, Jn 11.11, etc. During sleep, one is supposed to be free from the concerns of the physical world. In that sense, the one who sleeps is in another world, his values and ways are different. Sleep is usually associated with night. Sleeping in the midst of crisis is considered a blessing – Lv 26.6, Job 11.18–19, Ps 4.8, Pr 3.23–24.

Feldmeier notes that γρηγορεῖν is used only in a metaphorical sense throughout the New Testament except the Gethsemane pericope (Feldmeier 1987:193). In 1 Th 5, a group of metaphors is used. In this epistle, light/darkness, day/night, sobriety/drunkenness and watchfulness/sleep are the contrasting words used in an eschatological context.

While noting πάλιν as a Markan feature, Best raises a doubt whether the threefold schema of finding the disciples sleeping could be Markan. He concludes that if there was a threefold schema, Mark emphasised it (Best 1981:148). Further, he asks “Can the ‘sleep’ motif be attributed to Mark?” He brings in the observation of Kelber of

the association of ‘coming’, ‘finding’ and ‘sleeping’ which are common to the Doorkeeper parable and the Gethsemane narrative to deduce the Markan construction of ‘sleep’. However, based on this observation only, we cannot conclusively validate or invalidate the historicity of the narrative.

In Gethsemane, the disciples sleep without being aware of what is going on. In the Gethsemane pericope, it is difficult to accept the metaphorical meaning of the word ‘sleep’. However, an additional metaphorical meaning can be ruled out neither in Jesus’ words, nor in Mark’s usage of the word.

5. The command of Jesus ‘to keep awake’:

Exhortation to vigilance is common in first century Christianity. Paul, significantly, uses this expression quite often. Rm 13.11, 1 Cor 16.13, Eph 6.18, Col 4.2, 1 Th 5.1–11. We also have other occurrences of this word. 1 Pt 5.6–10, Rv 3.3, 16.15, GTh 21,103, Did 16.1. To these, the parallels of Mk 13.33–37 namely Mt 24.42, 25.13, Lk 12.40, 17.40, 19.12–13 and 21.36 could also be added.

We need to ask here what it means to be awake or to be watchful. The disciples were not explicitly told what to do when they were asked by Jesus to be awake. However, when Jesus finds them sleeping, he commands them to watch and pray that they may not enter into temptation. The command to pray is added only on the second occasion.

In the Doorkeeper parable, it is understandable that it is the duty of the doorkeeper to be alert and to protect the household from the attack of a thief or any kind of destruction. What kind of alertness did the disciples lack? From the Passion Narrative as a whole, we know how the disciples were taken by surprise when the arrest and the crucifixion of Jesus happened. It looks more probable that by his command to watch Jesus means the disciples to understand what is going on and to participate in the suffering he undergoes.

To conclude, the disciples are asked to be awake and to pray. Sleeping is contrary to Jesus' command. Also this and sleeping at a time when they had to pray are primary issues in this context. We are not referring here to an eschatological hour. The hour in question is the hour of Jesus' great need of friendship and companionship. It will become clear as we discuss the next section. The main purpose behind this action is that they may not enter into temptation. Whether it actually happened or not has been already a question in the historicity of the whole narrative. Now we move on to the next step of finding out what it means not to enter into the temptation.

D. That You May Not Enter Into Temptation

In the Gethsemane narrative, Jesus told his disciples “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation”¹⁰. The theme of ‘entering into temptation’ is also found in the Lord’s Prayer in the versions of Matthew and Luke (Mt 6.13, Lk 11.4). What did he mean when he told his disciples “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation”? What is the meaning of the word “πειρασμός”? What does it mean “to enter into”? Was Jesus talking about a testing or an enticement to sin? Could it mean entering into the act of tempting? An Equally important question is, at Gethsemane, did Jesus himself enter into temptation?

Mt 6.13 and Lk 11.4 have “μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν” as one of the biddings. The causative sense embedded in ‘εἰσενέγκῃς’ has been pointed out and it has undergone elaborate discussions. How can God, whom Jesus taught to address as Father, be in any way responsible for ‘leading’ someone into temptation if we understand temptation as an enticement to sin?

1. Possible meanings of the word πειρασμός

There could be a minimum of four meanings attributed to the word πειρασμός. (a) Undergoing a test (b) Undergoing an enticement to sin (c) Act of testing someone (d) Act of enticing someone to sin. It would be helpful to look at some of the examples

¹⁰ We follow RSV here over against NRSV (Anglicised Version) in other places. We consider that RSV here is closer to the Greek text than NRSV.

from the Greek texts. All the following examples have got forms of either *πειρασμός* or *πειράζω* in them.

(a) Undergoing a test

It has been considered good and important in many writings to undergo a test. King David pleads with God saying “Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and mind” (Ps 26.2). In Sirach, undergoing a test has been considered usual. “My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing” (Sir 2.1). “No evil will befall someone who fears the Lord, but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again” (Sir 33.1). “He certified the covenant in his flesh, and when he was tested he proved faithful” (Sir 44.20).

(b) Undergoing an enticement to sin

Paul advises the spiritual brothers in Galatia how to restore someone who is overtaken in any transgression. In that context he tells them not to undergo enticement to sin. We read in Gl 6:1 “My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted”.

(c) Act of testing someone

God testing human beings: God tested Abraham (Gn 22.1). The Lord proved the Israelites (Ex 15.25, 16.4, 20.20). The Lord God tested the Israelites to learn what was in their heart (Dt 8.2, 13.3, Jdg 2.22). God tried Hezekiah (2 Chr 32.31).

Human beings testing God: The Israelites put the Lord to the proof (Ex 17.2, 7, Nm 14.22). Gideon tried God (Jdg 6.39). Ahaz said “I will not put the Lord to the test” (Is 7.12). The Israelites were commanded not to put the Lord their God to the test, as they tested him at Massah (Dt 6.16).

Human being testing another human being: The queen of Sheba tested Solomon with hard questions (1 Ki 10.1, 2 Chr 9.1). Daniel said to the steward to test Daniel and his friends with regard to their food (Dn 1.12).

Human beings testing themselves: The man clothed in linen told Daniel about those who purify themselves (πειρασθῶσι) (Dan 12.10).

(d) Act of enticing someone to sin

The devil or Satan tempted Jesus (Mt 4.1, Mk 1.13, Lk 4.2). The devil is called ὁ πειράζων in Mt 4.3. This name is given to him because of the nature of his actions. The examples given here are not exhaustive.

2. A Survey of the word πειρασμός in the Gospels

It is helpful to note the occurrence of πειράζω and related words in the Gospels to establish the meaning with which it is used in the Gethsemane narrative.

‘Temptation’ is used in the Gospels mainly in the following six instances.

1. *The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness*

Mk 1.13 is in connection with the experience of Jesus in the wilderness where he was “tempted by Satan”. In Luke, the noun form πειρασμός is used to describe the experience of Jesus in the wilderness.

2. *Temptation in the statement ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου*

Lk 22.28 says “You are those who have stood by me ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου”.

S.Brown argues that τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου does not simply refer to the temptation during the passion of Jesus. Rather, the whole life of Jesus is understood as “a life spent in πειρασμοί” (S.Brown 1969:9). Further he argues that

The πειρασμοί that Jesus suffered during his ministry and which reach their climax in the passion are therefore not to be equated with the diabolic πειρασμός in the desert. The word may well refer to the traps set for Jesus by his human adversaries... (:9)

By all means, the πειρασμοί during the life of Jesus is very clear in this Lukan passage.

3. Temptation by the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and the lawyer

Mk 8.11 is concerned with the Pharisees testing Jesus while they sought a sign from heaven. Mk 10.2 is about the Pharisees testing Jesus with a question about divorce. In Mk 12.15 Jesus replies to the Pharisees and some of the Herodians in the controversy over paying taxes to Caesar “Why are you putting me to the test?”

4. Temptation in the parable of the sower

The explanation about the parable of the sower contains the word ἐν καιρῷ πειρασμοῦ in Lk 8.13. However, it should be noted that the parallels in Mt 13.21 and Mk 4.17 have got θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ in the same context (tribulation or persecution).

5. Temptation in the Lord's Prayer

Mt 6.13 is the long-discussed sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer: “Lead us not into temptation”.

6. Temptation in the Gethsemane narrative

In addition, it is worth noting the second reference to temptation in the Gethsemane narrative of Lk 22.46 where Jesus says “Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation”. In Mark, the command of Jesus to his disciples is – “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation” (14.38).

7. By Jesus

Jesus tested Philip in Jn 6.6. Jn 8.6 which has got attestation only in late mss¹¹, mentions that the scribes and the Pharisees wanted to test Jesus while they brought the woman caught in adultery. Apart from this reference, John does not talk about anyone testing Jesus or Jesus undergoing πειρασμός. Rather, he has only one reference where Jesus tests one of his disciples. It should be noted here that this observation is in line with the Johannine emphasis on Jesus being in control everywhere.

3. Towards an Exegetical solution

There could be at least two ways of interpreting this text. One is to concentrate on the verb εἰσέλθῃτε. (Some manuscripts of Mark have ἔλθῃτε instead of εἰσέλθῃτε)¹². Scholars like Carmignac and Torrey have attempted to explain this verb from an Aramaic original which holds a causative meaning: “cause us not to enter into temptation”. Jeremias has suggested “yield to temptation”. Grayston feels that “these attempts to stretch the meaning of the verb are failures” (Grayston 1993:280).

¹¹ Jn 7.53-8.11 is not found in P⁶⁶ P⁷⁵ Ⲙ A^{vid} B C^{vid} L N T W Δ Θ Ψ 0141 33 157 565 1241 1333* 1424* *Lect* it^{a, f, l, q} syr^{c, s, p, h} (but added in some late mss. of syr^{p, h}) cop^{sa, pbo, bo pt, ach 2} arm^{mss} geo slav Diatessaron Origen Chrysostom Cyril; Tertullian Cyprian mss^{acc. to Augustine}.

¹² The following manuscripts of Mark have ἔλθῃτε: Ⲙ* B f¹³ 2427 pc q. The following manuscripts of Mark have εἰσέλθῃτε: Ⲙ² A C D L W Θ Ψ 083.0116 f¹ M sy.

The second way of interpreting the text is to concentrate on the noun πειρασμός. Various scholars have given different renderings. They are mainly ‘test’, ‘trial’ and ‘temptation’. There have been attempts to prove this as ‘the trial/test’ which is the eschatological test. However, there is no article before πειρασμός in Greek to denote that meaning. Moreover, πειρασμός is not necessarily a technical term for the eschatological trial. Therefore this meaning need not necessarily be taken in the Gethsemane context.

(a) Confusion with the Lord's Prayer:

First of all, we need to be clear about the problems involved on our way. The problem of the temptation clause has been brought to us mainly through the Lord's Prayer. We regard the temptation clause as belonging to the Gethsemane pericope for the following reasons. (1) The writer or the composer of the Gospels of Mt, Mk and Lk believed that the temptation clause belongs to the Gethsemane pericope. (2) Early Christian writers understood the temptation clause belonging to the Gethsemane scene. By saying this, we do not preclude the possibility of the same clause in the Lord's Prayer.

Most of the discussions on the temptation clause are centred around the Lord's Prayer. This makes many commentators attribute the clause in Gethsemane also with the same meaning. In the Lord's Prayer, ‘Our Father in Heaven’ is the one who seems to lead someone into temptation. Whereas, in the context of Gethsemane, the underlying force is not named. The disciples have been asked to watch and pray so

that *they* may not enter into temptation. To some extent, we could say that it is some deliberate transitive action of the disciples. At the same time the addition of the command to pray with this clause gives some indication that the clause is related to watching and praying.

By all means, the difference is significant. Asking God not to lead into temptation is different from the disciples themselves entering into temptation. On the face of it, the similarity of phrases in the Lord's Prayer and the Gethsemane narrative may suggest that the meaning of the two sentences about temptation are the same. However, with a closer reading of the text, we can find the difference easily.

Therefore, uncoupling the temptation at Gethsemane from the temptation in the Lord's Prayer is our first task. Probably, the eschatological meaning of πειρασμός could be attributed to the Lord's Prayer context easily. This is not the case in Gethsemane since it is still more difficult to interpret the incidents eschatologically. Even if there may be eschatological elements in the Gethsemane narrative, this does not demand that the word 'temptation' refers to the final ordeal.

J.A.T. Robinson argues that James 1.12–14 and 1 Cor 10.13 are commentaries of either the Lord's Prayer or the Jewish presuppositions about temptation. He writes that the comment of James may be to correct a false inference that God leads us into temptation. He also notes that it is always Satan who tempts in the New Testament (1 Cor 7.5, Mt 4.1 and Lk 4.1). He considers Gethsemane as "another commentary on the Lord's Prayer". In Gethsemane it "does not mean 'Pray that you are not put to

the test' but 'Pray that you are not engulfed by it' or as Paul expresses it: 'Pray that there may be a way out, so that you are not sucked in or submerged by it'. Rather, as the Matthaean addition here rightly interprets it, it is a petition 'Rescue us from evil'" (J.A.T.Robinson 1984:62-63).

It has to be noted, however, that in Robinson's comments the confusion we referred to earlier is clearly portrayed. We do not have sufficient evidence to say that one statement is a commentary of another one. Moreover, this interpretation could lead us to a stage where we completely reject any trace of Jesus' saying in the Gethsemane context. Since the early church and the church Fathers found sense in the contexts as they are, it is worth trying for independent meanings for independent passages before we look for further links.

(b) Is God the author of πειρασμός?

This problem is raised with the assumption that πειρασμός denotes enticement to sin. On the one hand, if it is a test, there is no difficulty in understanding God as the one who tests. On the other hand, if the meaning is that of testing, it is less probable that Jesus asked his disciples to pray not to be tested.

It is worth noting how the biblical writers understood the author of πειρασμός. According to 2 Sm 24.1,10, the Lord incites David to sin. The same event is written in 1 Chr 21.1 which says that Satan incited David. Twelfree argues that "avoiding

the idea that God tempts directly is a development in post-exilic thought” (Twelftree 1992:821).

There is a Jewish prayer from a Rabbi in *Berakhot* 60b. It describes clearly how a pious Jew prayed so that he will be delivered from the impulse to do evil.

May it please you, Lord my God, to make me lie down in peace, give me my lot in your Torah, make it my custom to do religious duties, do not make it my custom to do transgressions nor bring me into the power of sin, violation, temptation, or humiliation. May the impulse to do good control me, and may the impulse to do evil not control me.

C.C.Torrey in a foot note to his *The Four Gospels* wrote long back (1933:292) about the possible meaning of ‘leading into temptation’.

The six passages, Mt 6.13, Lk 11.4, Mt 26.41, Mk 14.38, Lk 22.40,46 illustrate a popular idiom of Palestinian Aramaic which, as far as I am aware, has not been found elsewhere. The verb is *‘al*, “go in”; in the account of Gethsemane the simple (*pe ‘al*) stem is used; in the Lord’s Prayer it is the causative stem, the *af‘ēl*; and in neither case does the Greek yield a plausible sense. The root-meaning required in these passages is “fail, succumb, yield”; thus interpreted, they come to their rights. It may be fruitless to conjecture, from which of the ordinary uses of the verb this meaning was derived (from the “going under” of the setting sun; from “entering” a trap or snare; or from some other idiom?); but the fact seems clear. The corresponding Heb. verb, *bā*, appears in an idiom somewhat like this in I Sam.25.26, where David has been kept from *incurring the guilt* of innocent blood, and the Greek has: τοῦ μὴ ἐλθεῖν εἰς αἷμα ἀθῶν.

For him, both εἰσφέρω and εἰσέρχομαι are translations of the one Hebrew or Aramaic verb. According to the Hatch and Redpath concordance to the LXX εἰσφέρειν is commonly used to render בָּרָא in the Hiphil (to cause to go = to bring) and εἰσερχέσθαι and ἔρχεσθαι are commonly used to render בָּרָא in the

Qal. Torrey guessed that either of these forms followed by the preposition **בְּ** and the word **הַטְּמָה** must have had an idiomatic sense.

J.C.O'Neill argues that the idiom in the Lord's Prayer 'lead us not into temptation' should not be taken for 'entering into a state', which is suggested by the preposition **εἰς**. Rather, similar to Carmignac, O'Neill holds that "the idiom is more likely to be that of not going under in the face of some external pressure"(O'Neill 1993:18).

Jean Carmignac in his extensive treatment of the Lord's Prayer argues that we cannot justify that God had a role in temptation (Carmignac 1969:267). He argues that the major meaning of the word **εἰσενέγκης** is not 'to make to come towards' or 'to carry towards', but 'to be introduced into' with a meaning of giving away or consenting to the temptation (:270-272). Therefore, he tries to establish that entering into temptation means yielding to temptation. He argues that 'do not lead us into' is equivalent of the Hebrew 'bring it about that we do not get enticed into sin'. Carmignac's argument has got two advantages. One is that God does not lead people to evil and the other is that the argument is based on linguistic considerations.

We accept the similarity between the Lord's Prayer and the Jewish idiom which Torrey and Carmignac point out. However, the link between the Gethsemane narrative, temptation narrative and the rebuke to Peter cannot be overlooked. This link suggests a different interpretation to the temptation in Gethsemane. The statement of Jesus at Lk 22.28 also supports this link. The crucial question here is

whether Jesus was tempted. We have noticed other places in the Gospels where Jesus was tempted.

Feldmeier in his recent study maintains that the command to watch and pray is not to prove faithful in the temptation but to avoid temptation. He also argues that in a religious sense *πειρασμός* means a danger to the relationship with God (Feldmeier 1987:200).

While discussing the Lord's Prayer, W.D.Davies argues that the petition 'lead us not into temptation' "underlines the frailty of human nature by excluding the self-confident desire to face temptation"(Davies 1988:612). He notices the negative nature of the third 'we' petition in the Lord's Prayer which is unpaired. He contrasts this with the prayer of Clement of Alexandria, a 'true gnostic': "O Lord, put me to the test" (Strom. 4.7.55). Thus Davies holds that the prayer to put us to the test is not to be preferred.

(c) *Test or Enticement?*

It is very important to note that in the LXX the cognates of *πειρασμός* have not been used to indicate an enticement to sin. On the contrary, it is distinguished clearly from sin in one occasion. (Ex 20.20 "...for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin)¹³. It is generally accepted that the meaning 'enticement to sin' is an additional one in the New Testament. In his long

¹³ The exception seems to be 1 Macc 1.15b and Prov 16.29

list of references in *TDNT*, Seesemann has no pre-New Testament instance where *πειρασμός* refers to an enticement to sin (1968).

We have instances in the LXX where *εἰσέρχομαι* together with *εἰς* has been used for different purposes. Ezk 16.7 to arrive at full womanhood; 1 Ki 11.2 to enter into marriage; 1 Ki 22.30 to go into battle (also 1 Chr 14.15, 2 Chr 18.29); Ps 95 (LXX 94).11 to enter God's rest; Ps 143(LXX 142).2 to enter into judgement. At least in three of the above instances, the meaning is about a transitive state. Entering into marriage could very well mean 'marry' in a transitive sense. Going to a battle means to fight (It could rarely mean to be fought). In the same way, entering into judgement could only mean judging (It does not mean being judged). Therefore, in line with the above Greek meanings, if we have to understand 'entering into temptation', it could mean 'entering into the act of tempting' rather than 'the act of being tempted'.

Testing is the action or process of examining by which the existence, quality or genuineness of anything is established. To some extent, the effect of failure in a test is equivalent to the effect of enticement. This unavoidably leads us to another question – Is there any neutral test where failure may not involve any moral aspects? In the case of materials, chemicals, instruments, etc. where moral and ethical questions are not involved, we can talk of neutral tests.

However, the moment we talk about the testing of faithfulness, endurance, patience, etc. of people, we instantly fall into the category of assessing the nature as good or

bad, right or wrong, true or false. Therefore, we could say that there is provision for committing sin (bad, wrong or false) in every test. Lawrence suggests that the context of entering into temptation might mean to the reader the ‘failure in the moment of testing’ or ‘failure to be a faithful martyr’ (Lawrence 1994:218).

(d) *Eschatological πειρασμός?*

Jeremias, the exponent of eschatological interpretation for the Lord’s Prayer argues that temptation here

does not mean the small temptations of everyday life but the great last test, which stands before the door, the revelation of the secret of evil, the abomination of desolation, Satan sitting on God’s throne, antichrist’s power revealed – the last temptation of God’s saints by pseudo-prophets and false saviours. (Jeremias 1970:100)

C.W.F.Smith concedes that πειρασμός in Mk 14.38 “refers to immediate dangers which will prove to be a test” (Smith 1962:157). He feels that “To limit the petition to enticement to sin is to narrow its meaning to the point of distortion” (:157). He does not exclude the meaning of the eschatological test in the Lord’s Prayer.

However, the eschatological interpretation of πειρασμός may be mistaken in the narrative of Gethsemane. Bruce holds that the meaning of Jesus’ command in Gethsemane is “Grant that the test may not prove too severe for our faith to sustain” (Bruce 1983:84). Luz argues that with the exception of Rv 3.10, “neither in Jewish apocalyptic nor in the New Testament is πειρασμός an apocalyptic technical

term” (Luz 1989:384). The context of Gethsemane does not demand an eschatological interpretation.

C.K.Barrett seems to favour an eschatological interpretation about ‘sleep’ and the command to be awake. He argues that it is inconceivable to see the disciples sleeping in the context of Gethsemane. It is understandable if they run away seeing the crucial situation which was dangerous. Therefore, Barrett concedes that the aspect of sleepy disciples in this narrative is due to misunderstanding of the command γρηγορεῖτε (Barrett 1967: 47). He argues that the command to be awake in the New Testament is usually related to the *parousia* of Christ. Therefore he continues “the evangelists mistakenly turned into a command to remain physically awake an exhortation to look out for the long-expected fulfilment of the apocalyptic hope, and went on to draw the inference that those to whom the command was addressed were falling asleep” (:47).

At the same time, Barrett argues also that this apocalyptic hope was not uncalled for and was not total invention of the evangelists. He comes to this conclusion due to the prevalence of a Jewish belief of expecting a messianic deliverance in Passover night and due to the fact that that particular night was the Passover night according to the Synoptic Gospels. Moreover, Jesus’ disappointment over the failure of God to vindicate is reflected at least in Mark and Matthew where Jesus dies with the words “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15.34) on his lips.

Therefore, going along with Barrett, we could agree that the evangelists confused the command to pray that they may not enter into temptation in a similar way. One important question has to be raised here. Was this link made just by the disciples only? Or did Jesus also make that link? Answering this problem, we need to admit that in Jesus' mind there was no link between Jewish expectation and his own disappointment. If Jesus believed that he is the answer for the expectant Jews, he did not have to be disappointed because along with that expectation went the expectation of suffering, death and vindication. In addition, if Jesus was disappointed by his crucifixion, it could be that he did not think that he was the expected Messiah.

Jewish expectation and Jesus' disappointment are to be de-linked from Barrett's explanation. If we uncouple these two and look at the disappointment of Jesus without any necessary link with the eschatological expectation, we get a different picture. We have several indications in the text that Jesus believed in the prophecy of the end-time. Some of the passages also suggest that expectation included suffering. But it is by no means clear that suffering is regularly linked with the eschatological expectation in the Jewish Messianic thought. If Jesus regarded suffering as an inevitable part of destiny, then disappointment could be out of place in the narrative of the crucifixion. But the cry of dereliction suggests disappointment.

There are several possibilities when confronted with the cry of dereliction: (1) To deny that it expresses disappointment (2) It reveals disappointment on a belief in a non-suffering messiahship. However, it is possible that Jesus saw his role both as

bringing some kind of fulfilment to Israel's hope and involving a strong possibility of suffering. If there is disappointment, it is not necessarily due to the lack of confidence in his role of fulfilment; it could be due to the full awareness of the magnitude of the cost involved. In the Gethsemane scene, Jesus begins to grapple with that problem.

Even if Barrett is right that there are some eschatological motifs in the Gethsemane scene, this does not require us to regard the reference to temptation as eschatological; also the cry of dereliction need not be interpreted as the disappointment of an eschatological hope which excludes suffering. The main reasons for rejecting the eschatological explanation for temptation at Gethsemane are also concerned with its association with the phrase 'enter into' and its association with other references to temptation in the Gospel narratives (Wilderness & Caesarea-Philippi).

So, we do not favour to have 'a time of trial' as a translation like the New RSV. Neither can we favour the footnote of New American Bible: "It is possible that the passion of Jesus is seen here as an anticipation of the great tribulation that will precede the parousia"¹⁴.

(e) *Who enticed whom?*

Traditionally, πειρασμός in the Gethsemane prayer has been mainly interpreted as that of the disciples only. This interpretation is not satisfactory for the following

¹⁴ cf. Footnote on Mt 26.41 in the New American Bible.

reasons. Firstly, the immediate context of Gethsemane does not imply any acute temptation for the disciples. Secondly, if we take καθεύδετε τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε of Mk 14.41 in the imperative sense, which has got much scholarly support, the above interpretation is insufficient.

Is it just that the disciples tempted Jesus to avoid the suffering? Can it be that Jesus also tempted God in making the prayer “Father take this cup away from me”? Is Jesus admonishing his disciples not to tempt him or not to tempt God? Whether it is tempting Jesus, tempting God or tempting one’s own self, the matter in question is ‘self-preservation’. According to James, God cannot be tempted. Because, he does not look for self preservation. James 1.13 says that “God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one”.

Tradition of man testing God

As early as 1966, C.B.Houk has written “certainly ‘testing God’ is a viable option for understanding πειρασμός in the Gethsemane saying” (Houk 1966:220). This suggested option has not been satisfactorily followed up in the later interpretations. We need to answer a few questions to make this interpretation a valid one for Gethsemane. (1) Are there any other instances in the Gospels where πειρασμός or its verbal cognate has been used as ‘testing someone’ or ‘testing God’? (2) Would this interpretation go in line with the normal trend of the Gospels? (3) How do we understand the command of Jesus ‘to be awake’ (*the command is not ‘do not sleep’*)

but 'be awake') which comes together with the command to pray if we take the above meaning? These questions will be answered as we discuss further.

Satan as the enticing agent for Jesus

H.A.Kelly argues for a link between the πειρασμός in the desert and the πειρασμός at the Passion (Kelly 1964:196). Interesting connections could be made between Mk 1.13 where Satan tempts Jesus, Mk 8.11 where the Pharisees tempt Jesus, Mk 8.33 where Peter has been called Satan for tempting Jesus and Mk 14.38 where the disciples are warned not to tempt. In the first two cases the object is unmistakably Jesus. In the third, it could easily be deduced that the object of temptation is Jesus. In the fourth, the object is not clear if we take the words as they are – 'enter into temptation'. On the other hand if we take a meaning of the disciples tempting Jesus, the meaning is clearer.

Best concedes that "although the word πειράζειν is not used in the account of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (8.32f) or in the Gethsemane account (14.32–42) with reference to Jesus, the concept of temptation is definitely present on these two occasions (Best 1990:5).

In this context, εἰ θέλεις (Mt 17.4) of the transfiguration narrative and εἰ βούλει (Lk 22.42) of the Gethsemane narrative could be taken together. Staying at the Mount of Transfiguration is the will of Peter which is different from that of Jesus. Removing the cup is the will of Jesus which is different from that of the Father. In

both cases, it is a question of temptation. Not to face the pain and challenges of human life seems to be the point of debate in both instances.

While the word σατανᾶς is connected with πειρασμός only in the wilderness narrative, σατανᾶς occurs in another significant place, i.e. Mk 8.33 (and the parallel Mt 16.23), where Peter rebuked Jesus saying “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you” (Mt 16.22). When rebuked by Peter, Jesus told “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things, but on human things” (Mk 8.33). In Matthew, we read an addition of “σκάνδαλον εἰ ἐμοῦ” (Mt 16.23). Peter is addressed as Satan and a stumbling block for distracting Jesus.

While the verbal form of πειρασμός has been used in Mk 1.13 and 8.11 for the temptation by Satan and Pharisees, it is also appropriate to understand the term for a temptation of Jesus by someone here in Gethsemane too. The term σατανᾶ which is the subject of temptation in 1.13 is used for Peter, one of his disciples, in 8.31. In Markan usage, Satan is the one who tempts Jesus in the wilderness; the term σατανᾶ is used in conjunction with βεελζεβοὺλ and δαιμόνια (3.22, 26); Satan is the one who takes away the word which is sown by the sower (4.15); and also we hear of Satan in 8.31 where Peter was named Satan for setting his mind ‘not on divine things but on human things’. Satan is someone who is against Jesus, his teachings and his way of doing things. He probably is also someone whose mind is set on human things (τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων) and not on divine things (τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ).

In Matthew, we have an additional instance where Jesus pronounces the word σατανᾶ when he was asked to fall down and worship the tempter (ὁ πειράζων). It is significant to note that on this occasion Matthew does not use the word σατανᾶ as Mark does (Mt 4.10); instead, Jesus uses this word. In Luke, Satan is the one who fell from heaven (Lk 10.18), the one who bound the crippled woman for eighteen years (Lk 13.16), the one who entered into Judas to make him betray Jesus (Lk 22.3) and the one who obtained permission to sift Simon and all other disciples like wheat (Lk 22.31). In John, Satan appears only in 13.27 where he enters into Judas which led to Jesus' betrayal.

We should note here that Lk 22.31 is placed very close to Jesus' comment about his disciples. "You are those who have stood by me in my trials¹⁵" Lk 22.28 (ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου). In Lukan order of events, just after referring to his own temptations, Jesus refers to his disciples' temptations. Moreover, here it is conceivable that Peter's denial is referred to as part of the disciples' temptations (Lk 22.34).

Let us consider the possible interpretation that the disciples are not to tempt or test Jesus. Is self-preservation really the point at which Jesus was tempted by his disciples? If Jesus' mission was partly to act against his desire for self-preservation, it is understandable that his disciples as participants of Jesus' mission also made special efforts to act against their self-preservation. It could be closely related to Mk

¹⁵ New RSV translation

8 where Peter was rebuked as he advised Jesus not to go for suffering. Here, Peter tempted Jesus. A link between Mk 8 and Mk 14 could advance this possible line of interpretation.

Roy Yates concedes that “In no uncertain terms Jesus rejected the popular Jewish Messianic tradition of political leadership as Satanic temptation” (Yates 1977:42). However it has to be noted that the issue here is much more complex. The popular Messiah or the Messianic Jesus is not developed explicitly in Mark. The kingship is different from a political kingship. Therefore, the suggestion that the political leadership is the Satanic temptation could not be construed in the context of Gethsemane. The narrative does clearly indicate that the avoidance of suffering is a temptation to be resisted. We should not fail to note here that Jesus is reminded of Satan when he faced the option of denying the suffering. More directly Jesus calls Peter Satan.

Tradition of Jesus' testing in Hebrews

Ellingworth concedes that in view of the themes of faithfulness, rebellion and disobedience of the believers and obedience of Christ in the book of Hebrews, *πειρασθείς* in Heb 2.18 may refer to “the temptation of Christ in Gethsemane to avoid death” (Ellingworth 1993:191). He adds, “it is possible to see the cross as being itself Christ’s supreme *πειρασμός*, and to see the *πειρασμοί* of believers as, first, trials of their resistance (12.4), and only secondarily as inducements to particular sins”.

The writer of Hebrews understands the suffering of Jesus as *πειρασμός* (Heb 2.18). According to Seesemann, Jesus underwent a temptation at Gethsemane, which is “the seduction into disobedience”. He argues that “the temptation placed the Lord in a situation of open choice between surrender to God’s will and revolt against it” (Seesemann 1968:33). He concedes that the author of Hebrews regarded the Jesus’ prayer at Gethsemane as ‘a prayer in temptation’.

The point at which Jesus was tempted

R.E.Brown brought our attention to the temptation account dispersed in John in his article in 1961 (:143–160). The parallels of the temptation narrative in Mt and Lk are dispersed in Jn 6.15, 6.26–34 and 7.1–4. In these three instances, Jesus was tempted to assume the kingdom of the world, he was enticed to multiply bread and he was tempted by his brothers to make a spectacle. When we put them together, we get evidence for Jesus being tempted in different aspects of his ministry. This connection of the Synoptic Gospels with the Fourth Gospel is very important to follow our argument. We get a similar situation in Gethsemane where Jesus seems to be given an alternative to drinking the cup.

O.Cullmann in his *The State in the New Testament* argues for a Zealot ideal being at work in the Gospels to describe the activities of Jesus (1957). He brings to our attention how Luke continues the theme of the temptation of Jesus at Gethsemane which he left at Lk 4.13 where the devil left Jesus until another opportune time. He argues that construing Jesus’ role as Messiah in political terms was Jesus’ constant

temptation (:40). However, as we have mentioned earlier, political understanding is not appropriate in the context of temptation at Gethsemane. Putting the sword in the sheath was a command to his disciples once. Yet on another occasion (Lk 22.35ff), whoever did not have a sword was asked to buy one.

As he discusses the first temptation in Lk 4.3, A.B.Taylor argues that the “material affairs which occupy so much of human existence and which cause so many worries and interruptions to ‘spiritual’ pursuits” are the point of temptation here (Taylor 1960:302). Therefore, he suggests, the question here is not of the deity of Christ but of his humanity. He further argues

For here, for the first time, Jesus became fully aware of the possibility of being something else beside human, and he made the deliberate, conscious decision to remain a man. His whole life was one of stewardship: handling the supernatural power of the Eternal Creator and using it for others, without being corrupted by it (:303).

P.S.Cameron suggests that the cup in the Gethsemane prayer is the graphic alternative to *πειρασμός* (Cameron 1990:300).

The question arises here whether we could use Taylor’s argument about the wilderness narrative in Gethsemane also. Did Jesus refer to this aspect when he said ‘that you may not enter into temptation’? If Jesus with all the supernatural powers bestowed on him was concerned about the options available to him either to be truly human or to be more than human, it was appropriate that Jesus asked his disciples not to tempt him (=that you may not enter into temptation). Moreover, here Jesus was

left with an option of fulfilling his own desire of preserving his life as opposed to standing for his calling and principles which he understood as his Father's will.

Therefore, when we consider the wilderness, Caesarea-Philippi and Gethsemane together, we have a strong tradition of Jesus being tempted. Here in Gethsemane, he expected his close friends Peter, James and John to keep awake when he was making his crucial decision. Alas, to the utter disappointment of Jesus, they all slept. Jesus was deeply disturbed. Therefore he told them: "You could not stay awake with me in my crisis! At least now watch and pray so that you do not tempt me to leave the path of suffering which seems to be the will of my Father".

The question here is not just whether Jesus asked the disciples to pray for him. It would be far-fetched to say "watch and pray for me ...". It is true as Crump argues that Jesus did not ask the disciples anywhere else to pray for him (1992:168). We do not have to supply $\mu\epsilon$ after $\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\lambda\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ of Lk 22.40 in the Gethsemane narrative to come to this understanding. There is neither any manuscript evidence nor any grammatical possibility for this insertion.¹⁶

A doubt could be raised whether it is logical to ask the disciples to be awake and pray if the temptation in question is that of Jesus. If the disciples are asleep, there will be no temptation for Jesus at all. If they are asleep, they will not distract Jesus from achieving the goal of fulfilling his Father's will. However, the very sleep of the disciples, his close friends, in the face of Jesus' crisis is not a good sign of friendship

¹⁶ cf. Barbour 1970:244, Holleran 1973:37.

at all. That shows that his close friends are not with him in spirit in the time of trouble. To see them asleep will definitely weaken Jesus' resolve and bring him distraction. That is why the disciples had to be awake and pray.

Here, we should note that the word ἵνα could have three different meanings – to express purpose, content or command. Based on the context and scholarly support, here, we could confidently say that it means the purpose of watching and praying. That is to say, the disciples should watch and pray *so that* they may not enter into temptation.

The disciples were tempted on different occasions. The denial of Peter and the betrayal of Judas are examples. However, we can clearly say that Jesus was also tempted based on our observations. His temptation was to escape his suffering and violent death. Here in Gethsemane, the temptation at sight could be that of the disciples too. Because there is a context in which the disciples are in danger of withdrawing their support for their master and friend, Jesus. It is an opportunity to prove their friendship with their master. They could sleep and be unconcerned and thereby be caught in their infidelity. However, the temptation for Jesus was very acute. It is a matter of yielding to the attraction of continuing his life at the compromise of his calling and his life principles.

4. Temptation at the point of death:

As we have noted in other sections, here also it is worth noting whether our major examples – Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp – faced temptation. We do not have any record of temptation either for Abraham or for Isaac in our available texts. On the contrary, according to the *Frag. Targ. to Gn 22.14*, there was no division of Abraham's heart. According to *4 Macc 16.20*, Abraham was zealous to immolate Isaac and Isaac did not flinch when he saw the sword in his father's hand.

In the case of Socrates, there was temptation by his friends to escape imminent death.

Crito argues with Socrates telling

And besides, Socrates, it seems to me the thing you are undertaking to do is not even right – betraying yourself when you might save yourself. And you are eager to bring upon yourself just what your enemies would wish and just what those were eager for who wished to destroy you ... I think you are abandoning your children ... you seem to be choosing the laziest way ... I am afraid people will think that this whole affair of yours has been conducted with a sort of cowardice on our part (*Crito*, 45C).

Socrates, as we read in *Crito* 48 B-D, raises the question of right and wrong. He proves by his excellent arguments to Crito that it is wrong to escape.

Eleazar was faced with temptation by some of the king's retinue. They said "Eleazar, why are you so irrationally destroying yourself through these evil things? We will set before you some cooked meat; save yourself by pretending to eat pork" (*4 Macc 6.14–15*). However, Eleazar rejects that option outright as base, irrational and shameful.

The police captain Herod and his father Niketas tried to persuade Polycarp saying, “But what harm is it to say, ‘Lord Caesar’, and to offer sacrifice, and so forth, and to be saved?” (MPol 8.8). Polycarp did not accept the offer. Therefore, it is common, even after someone is convinced they have to suffer, to be attracted by others, to escape.

To conclude this section, temptation in the face of violent death is a common phenomenon in the history of human-kind. In some form or other, men and women who die taking their conviction seriously had opportunities to compromise. In some cases, it is so prominent and in others it is very subtle. In the case of Jesus, we have a prominent tradition to trace an explicit temptation.

In the context of Gethsemane, we could either concentrate on the verb ‘enter into’ or on the noun ‘temptation’ for the interpretation of the present phrase. The interpretation we give in the context of the Lord’s Prayer is not sufficient for our purpose in Gethsemane. There could be mainly three meanings for the phrase “enter into temptation”. Firstly, it has been understood by many as something representing the eschatological trial. We have not preferred this meaning in the Gethsemane context since the context does not demand an eschatological explanation and *πειρασμός* is not necessarily a technical term for eschatological trial.

Secondly, it is possible to apply this phrase exclusively to the disciples. According to this interpretation, Jesus told his disciples to be awake and to pray so that the disciples will not be lured to desert Jesus. This could be one of the meanings. But

seeing the context closely in the light of our present study, this is not sufficient to grasp the full meaning of Jesus' command.

Therefore, we have attempted to give our third meaning which unites Jesus himself in the command. According to this understanding, Jesus asked the disciples to watch and to pray so that they would not lure Jesus to forsake his chosen path of suffering which was God's will for him. It is a temptation for Jesus by the disciples (his friends) to refuse his death as given by his Father. However, he did not succumb to it.

E. Conclusion

Our study on the four main themes of the Gethsemane narrative has helped us to understand better the prayer and Jesus' attitude towards his death. The cup of suffering and death was not removed from Jesus as he prayed. The will of his Father which was different from his own will was brought forth. The disciples were asked not to sleep and to be awake but they failed and tempted Jesus. However, Jesus did not fall into the temptation of avoiding his death.

Jesus asked the Father to remove that cup from him. Cup, being powerful imagery in the biblical and extra-biblical literature, could have different shades of meanings. We also have noticed how during the course of time a particular imagery tends to change in its meaning and implications. The scholarly interpretation stands divided in this area. Scholars tend to take sides either with a cup of punishment and wrath or with a cup of suffering and death. Based on a thorough search in the Gospels, especially Jesus' attitude reflected in other parts of the Gospels we have concluded that Jesus refers to a cup of suffering and death at Gethsemane.

"Not my will but yours be done" was Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane which depicts how eagerly Jesus wanted to comply with his Father's desires. Even if it is a matter of drinking the cup which he personally did not like, he actively wanted to subordinate his will to the will of God. Based on his knowledge of the prophets and other Jewish and Hellenistic martyrs, he could have suspected a violent death for himself too. Yet we have noticed that it is not a fixed fate for which he was

submitting. He did not passively go into that violent death. There is evidence to show how he avoided entering into that state passively.

Even if the actual words of the passion predictions are later reflections of the early church, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that Jesus himself knew what might happen to him if he continued his way of confrontation with the authorities. It might very well be that he talked about this doubt with his disciples.

There is a tension between the complete knowledge of what was going to happen to Jesus action by action and the available open options reflected in the prayer at Gethsemane. For scholars, there is a temptation to choose either one or the other. However, the whole prayer of Jesus and his life story portrayed in the Gospels clearly carry a tension between the 'known-ness' and the 'unknown-ness' of the events. It is better to accept that tension and to refrain from softening it. We also have noted how different it is from the examples – Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp – and the way they reacted at the end of their lives.

The disciples are portrayed as not being awake when Jesus was making a crucial and difficult decision in his life. He, therefore, pleaded with them to be awake and pray. There is a scholarly doubt whether it really happened or the evangelists had a hand in the making. It is very difficult to conceive of the disciples sleeping at a situation like Gethsemane. On the other hand, as it was suggested by Barrett, if the eschatological command to be awake was confused with the literal sleep, such an attribution is understandable.

The discussion on the final theme about temptation has brought forth a different picture of the state of Jesus at Gethsemene. After considering the different possible interpretations of the word *πειρασμός* and the verb 'enter into', we have argued successfully that the temptation at sight was primarily of Jesus. Here, Jesus asked his disciples for support and told them not to tempt as Satan and Peter tempted him on different occasions of his life. He was being tempted to avoid the suffering and possible death which were unavoidable consequences of his just and righteous life. This understanding of the phrase "that you may not enter into temptation" is in line with the earlier petition of Jesus at Gethsemane.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

In this study we have tried to look at three different aspects connected with Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane. First, we looked at the last words or prayers of four different people, namely Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp and their link with Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane. In the second phase we looked into five different literary traditions of the Gethsemane prayer. Thirdly, we concentrated our attention on four major themes inside the Synoptic Gethsemane pericope. It remains now to come to a holistic understanding about the prayer and the one who offered the prayer based on our findings.

A. Four peoples' last words or prayers:

The initial phase of our research helped us to understand the cultural milieu in which Gethsemane emerged. In this way, Isaac's prayer helps us to know the Jewish thought pattern of the first century. As we read in *Jewish Antiquities* 1.232, Isaac rushed to the altar saying that to disregard the will of God and his father would be impious. He was very glad to resign himself willingly.

This is definitely different from the Biblical narrative in Gn 22. However, if this version of the Aqedah story was prevalent in the milieu of Jesus, it is possible that Jesus read about this or at least heard about this tradition. We have noted that there

was also a tradition that talks about the prayer of Abraham. In the *Fragmentary Targum (W) to Gn 22.14*, Abraham makes it clear that he offers up his son to make him dust and ashes without any division in his heart. Rather, he emphasises his joyful fulfilment of God's command. Because of this, Abraham pleads to God

I beg mercy from before You, O Lord God; when the children of Isaac enter into an hour of oppression that you will remember for them the binding <of> Isaac their father, and release and forgive their sins, and redeem them from all distress; for the generations that are destined to rise after him will say: 'On the mountain of the Holy Temple of the Lord, Abraham offered up Isaac his son; and on this mountain, which is the Holy Temple, the *'iqar s^ekhinta* of the Lord was revealed'. [Tr. M.L.Klein]

It looks as if Isaac's *obedience and willingness* together with Abraham's have been accepted in God's sight as sacrifice and something that forgives people's sins and which redeems people from all distress. This is done even without Isaac literally being sacrificed according to the tradition.

If Jesus was familiar with the tradition of Aqedah, as we have already mentioned, could it be that Jesus thought his death and sacrifice would be accepted even without the actual performance of it? He could have thought that his obedience and willingness were more than sufficient and that his actual death was not required. This could be one of the reasons why Jesus cries out on the cross "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?" in spite of his resolution after the Gethsemane prayer.

Secondly, in our study of the words of Socrates just before his death, we noticed Socrates saying that to be troubled in the face of death is a sufficient indication of a

lover of the body. It is the same case with a lover of money and honour. A lover of wisdom will not be troubled because he is going to die.

Socrates refused to escape from the prison even though he was able. He claimed that it would be wrong to escape. He preferred to be a lover of wisdom rather than a lover of the body. The way Socrates defended his case against his opponents shows how keen he was not to die without sufficient reason. At the same time, once he was condemned to death, he accepted it wholeheartedly. In the course of his defence, he tried to find out the necessity of his death or the will of God. To a great extent, this was done by arguments with the help of his intellectual strength.

The last words of Socrates "Crito, we owe a cock to Aesculapius. Pay it and do not neglect it" are important as enabling us to see the serenity of a wise man before death. As Greek literature had a great influence on the literary world of the first century, it is possible that Jesus was familiar with the heroic death of Socrates and his words. In addition, our observation has enabled us to conclude that the Gospel writers have been influenced by the Greek writings.

At this stage, we discussed the prevalence of Greek in the first century Judaea, Samaria and Galilee. We have listed the literary resemblances between some Greek and Latin writings with the New Testament. The existence of common themes and the prevalence of the stories of the Hellenistic martyrs in those writings are to be noted. They enable us to look into the thought pattern of the First century which was probably an everyday reality for Jesus.

We also have argued that to say that Jesus was unaware of Greek culture or literature would be unrealistic. Socrates, being one of the prominent philosophers of the Greeks, had a great impact on Greek culture. It is most likely that Jesus and the Gospel writers were aware of the Socrates figure from Greek culture. The linguistic resemblance could be traced as we have done in chapter three between Plato's writings and the Synoptic Gospels. It is possible that Jesus may have known something of the traditions about Socrates. It is more probable that Luke knew of this tradition better than any other evangelist.

Jesus should have known that to be troubled in the face of death is not considered honourable in the sight of wise people. Our reference to Eleazar sheds some light on the life of Jewish martyrs. He prays to God that his life may be accepted in exchange for other people's and his blood be made their purification. He also points out that he could have saved his life if he wanted (4 Macc 6.27–29).

We noticed that the certainty and the willingness of Eleazar were exemplary for the other martyrs. There is no question of escape from his torture in Eleazar's mind. It is also to be noted that the tradition of martyrs is not new to Jesus. Eleazar's prayer to accept his death as an expiatory sacrifice might also have been familiar among the religious Jews. There is a high probability that the story or prayer of Eleazar influenced either Jesus or the Gospel writers in a significant way. We could only establish the possibility of an influence.

The martyrdom of Eleazar makes better sense when taken with the courageous acts of the Maccabean martyrs. The mass suicide at Masada is very important to note in this context. Even though it happened in 73 CE, it is a great marker to get into the thought pattern of the first century. The Zealot Fortress of Masada could be called a Jewish national shrine. The excavations of Yigael Yadin have given new enthusiasm to the study of Masada. In terms of literature, Josephus is the only authentic person to have written accounts about the tragic events of Masada. Josephus, a Jew, writes the Roman history about the zealous Jews who preferred to kill themselves than surrender to the Romans. They could not see themselves slaves of somebody other than God Himself.

Our fourth example is Polycarp. The Christian martyr Polycarp's story has been discussed with caution because it comes from the second century and it draws on the model of Jesus himself. However, in our study, this account is helpful because it reflects the mind set of a second century religious person. We have a proof here for a background which accepts dying in the name of someone else as normal and meritorious.

Polycarp was so thankful in his prayer for the opportunity to share in the cup of Christ along with a number of martyrs (MPol 14). He also prayed that he might be received as a rich and acceptable sacrifice. Polycarp had the chance to escape but he refused to escape because he considered martyrdom the will of God. The example of Polycarp, since it emerged after the time of Jesus, gives us a clue retrospectively of a probable ethos of Jesus' background.

B. Five different literary traditions about Gethsemane:

The primary function of the second phase was to show how the varied portrayals by different authors of the same incident have come to provide a varied picture of Jesus' attitude towards his death. This included a study of the different literary evidences of Gethsemane in the New Testament. Our primary motive is not to prove one account is earlier or another is later. Instead, it is to establish how a pluralistic view about such a homogeneous incident was possible in the writings of the New Testament. In addition, we have tried to trace back to Jesus' own attitude behind those independent accounts.

There could be two different possible modes of operation for our study. One is, as some people have tried in the early centuries, to make a harmony out of the different accounts. This will undoubtedly belittle the importance of certain features of the individual accounts. Therefore, we have preferred to take each account on its own merits so that we can appreciate the minor details without assuming that the one or the other is the original. We also assume here that each account is an interpretation of the incident. Therefore each interpretation holds an important value for a twentieth century reader.

The Markan affirmative sentence "For you all things are possible" is not found in Matthew. Instead, we read a conditional phrase "If it is possible". The change of Jesus' standpoint during the prayer that is recorded in Matthew from "If it is possible" to "If this cannot pass unless I drink it" is not found in Mark. Even if these

look like simple variations of words, the implications of these expressions are noteworthy. The expression “he threw himself on the ground” in Mark and the expression “he knelt down” in Luke are not the same. They definitely state the emotional state at which the writer wanted to portray Jesus. In addition, the attribution of λύπη to the disciples in Luke instead of Mark and Matthew’s attribution of the same emotion to Jesus has been identified as a major aspect of Luke’s tendency not to attribute emotions to Jesus.

The very absence of any dilemma on the part of Jesus unfailingly explains the sort of Jesus John wanted to portray. Jesus seems to have a clear indication of what he has to do and undergo. He is so committed to fulfil the will of his Father that there is no duality of intention at all.

There are significant differences between the accounts of the four Gospels and the Letter to the Hebrews. Even if it is true that the sayings of Jesus have been preserved with great care, the way each one wrote has to do with the different opinion the writer or the editor has formed about the incident and his own purpose in putting the story together.

Therefore, we argue that different literary traditions are the key to understanding the attitude of Jesus as perceived by the New testament writers. These understandings lead us to see the original attitude of Jesus himself. We see a Jesus frightened by his impending death in Mark. Jesus in Matthew is showing some change in his stance as he proceeds through his prayer in Gethsemane itself. Jesus does not lose his kneeling

position in Luke even if the context is the worst, to the extent of blood dropping as sweat.

John has a Jesus who is fully in control of the situation. Jesus of John does not have any dilemma at all. Rather, he asks a question: The cup which my Father has given me—shall I not drink it? The Letter to the Hebrews portrays Jesus as the one who offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears during the days of his flesh. It is generally accepted that this reference is to the Gethsemane incident.

In spite of different traditions, as we have argued in the section on historicity, there are strong reasons to concede that the Gethsemane event really happened in the life of Jesus just before his death.

C. Four themes from Gethsemane:

Our last section considers the specific issues from the Synoptic Gethsemane accounts. The important questions raised in this section are: (1) What did Jesus mean by praying “take this cup away from me”? (2) What did he mean by the phrase “will of God”? (3) What is the role of the disciples in the Gethsemane narrative? (4) What is the meaning of the command of Jesus, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation”?

We have identified that these questions reflect the attitude of Jesus towards his death so plainly. The cup to which Jesus refers is the cup of suffering and death. This is the one that gave him the agony and pain. In spite of the fact that he had talked

earlier about his frightful death, when it actually faces him, he prays to his Father to remove this cup. Even though this prayer of Jesus is welcomed by many as an identification of Jesus with suffering humanity, the early church found it difficult to grasp this side of Jesus. For many modern readers, the story of Jesus' Gethsemane is a great encouragement since he went through the uncertainty and pain that is characteristic of human beings. However, this was not the case with the early church Fathers.

We have argued that the evidence compels us to understand the Gethsemane cup as a cup of suffering and death rather than a cup of wrath or punishment. To summarise our argument, there is no other saying in Mark's Gospel where Jesus talks of his death as the punishment or wrath of God. The prayer makes perfect sense without inserting the theme of punishment or wrath of God. Jesus accepts the notion that James and John could drink the cup that Jesus drinks and therefore it is not something to be drunk exclusively by Jesus alone. None of the passages that talk about the divine necessity of Jesus' death has got any notion of the wrath or punishment of God. Due to the possibility of multiple meanings of the same metaphor, the shift of meaning and the other above reasons, we have concluded that the meaning of the cup of suffering and death has to be preferred over against the cup of wrath or punishment in the context of Gethsemane.

The theme "will of God" has been an important consideration in many peoples' lives in different religions. Our examples, Isaac, Socrates, Eleazar and Polycarp were much concerned with this question. Isaac was happy that he was obeying both the

will of God and of his father according to the *Jewish Antiquities*. The priestess at Delphi was the one who revealed the will of God for Socrates which led on to all the trials and punishment later.

In the case of Eleazar, it was not a big struggle to identify the will of God since it was understood to be revealed in the Law. Eleazar makes it clear that it is for the sake of the Law he is undergoing the torment. In the case of Polycarp, the question of the will of God was explicit. We read that instead of escaping death, Polycarp said "the will of God be done". For him the question about the will of God was a serious concern.

However, we have also noted the dilemma of Jesus at Gethsemane in identifying the will of God as opposed to his own will. This is more explicit in the case of Jesus than for the other four people we have studied. It could be either a reflection of the historical Jesus or a viewpoint of the writer.

The third feature that we chose was about the sleeping disciples. Sleeping disciples were not able to stand by the agonising Jesus. Jesus warned them not to sleep but to pray. According to Jesus, keeping awake was necessary in order to stand firm during temptation. The disciples are given a prominent role in the narrative of the Gospel. However, mostly they are on the negative side. We need to come to agreement whether the sleeping of the disciples at Gethsemane was historically true or not. One thing we can establish beyond doubt is that for the writer, the sleeping of the

disciples was true. In his view, the sleeping of the disciples deserved a reproof from Jesus and it was something that could lead the disciples to enter into temptation.

“Entering into temptation” is the fourth theme we chose from Gethsemane. The possible meanings of πειρασμός were listed to find out the nearest meaning in the Gethsemane context. Undergoing a test, undergoing an enticement to sin, an act of testing someone and an act of enticing someone to sin are the different possible linguistic meanings. However, taking the lead from Houk, we established that ‘the act of enticing someone to sin’ could be the nearest meaning in our context.

There could be different interpretations for this passage. One possibility is that the disciples are asked not to entice Jesus to sin. In our discussion on what could be the sin referred to, self-preservation is identified as the most probable one. Jesus tells his disciples to pray that they may not tempt him to refuse the cup that his Father had given him.

Jesus, at his critical time, begged his friends for support. He pleaded with them to be there or to be awake. When he saw them asleep after the first prayer, Jesus with severe disappointment said to Simon “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not be awake for one hour?” Probably Jesus was very sad at this point. He was disappointed about the behaviour of his friends. So he went on talking with them saying, “Now, you pray. It is all right that you do not support me in my pain. At least do not tempt me to reject my Father’s will. Therefore, to avoid that kind of temptation, pray”.

In understanding the depth of Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane, our threefold analysis helps in a significant way. All the Jewish, Hellenistic and Christian tradition that we covered in our study clearly points us towards the thought pattern of the first century. Jesus accepted death wholeheartedly not because of his assurance on bodily resurrection, but rather, he accepted his death because that was the will of God, his Father.

As we consider all the three aspects of our study, the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane becomes clearer. The prayer projects Jesus' attitude towards his own death. The four examples from his cultural milieu have enabled us to learn more about Jesus' prayer. The five different writers' portrayals of Jesus have made us understand the plurality of opinion in the first century with regard to the perception of Jesus in Christian circles. Finally, the four themes that we chose have enabled us to appreciate the depth of Jesus' pain and his uncompromising desire for his Father's will.

Jesus' inner desire to avoid the unjust suffering and untimely death dominates the whole scene of Gethsemane. Our main claim in this work is that Jesus genuinely wanted to escape from his presumably impending death at Gethsemane; and yet he accepted it willingly as he realised that it was his Father's will. We have come to this understanding due to the following results of our study: (1) Jesus was aware of the tradition where Isaac was accepted as a sacrifice even without his actual death. (2) In spite of knowing the Greek tradition of wise men dying serenely Jesus differed considerably in the way he faced his death. The later Biblical traditions, however,

have the tendency of elevating the abject terror of Jesus into a solemn heroism. (3) Eleazar was more than willing to give his life for the purification of others. It is highly probable that Jesus knew about the traditions of Jewish martyrs and their claim that they died for the law and for the people. (4) Our brief study of Polycarp has enabled us to enter into the psychological milieu of ancient times where giving oneself in death in the name of someone else was considered absolutely normal and praiseworthy.

The studies about the cup, the will of God, the sleep of the disciples and temptation give a clear clue of Jesus' attitude towards his death. In spite of the effort of some of the evangelists to soften the tone, Jesus' fear and anxiety are nakedly perceptible through other evangelists. However, the fact that he genuinely went through uncertainty at Gethsemane and that he wanted to escape from the ensuing suffering is astonishing if we look at the heroic cultural background he had.

We realise how unique was the experience of Jesus at Gethsemane regardless of the influences that he could have had. His prayer "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want" remains a unique experience of his own.

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